

Chapter One

Introduction

“The [Balti] villages, then, are oases in so far as they represent islands of vegetation and human habitation ... isolated from each other and well nigh lost in the midst of barren mountains” (De Filippi 1932: 77).

“Politically Baltistan was thus a dead end, an Eastward-stretching tract of Pakistani-held territory without exit, pressed between Communist-controlled Tibet and the remote Buddhist corner of Indian-held Kashmir known as Ladakh” (Stephens 1953: 186).

1.0 Introduction

The point of departure for this research is a broad interest in the process by which the Himalayan mountains have become part of, and dominated by, much larger political and economic entities. As has been the case throughout the Greater Himalayan Region since 1947¹, *Pax Britannica* has been replaced by hegemonic projects, whereby different parts of the mountain region have been claimed by India, Pakistan and China respectively. These political claims have been backed by military presence, so that most of the mountain region, previously a mosaic of semi-autarchic societies, has become integrated into these emerging territorial states (Kreutzmann 1991, 1995, Jodha 1992, Allan 1991, Sökefeld 2005).

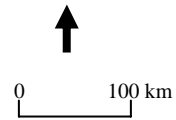
Baltistan is a high altitude mountain area, covering some 25,000 km² and situated in the Karakorum Mountains. A part of the disputed territory of Kashmir, Baltistan is located immediately north of what is now known as the Line of Control, dividing Pakistani- and Indian-held Kashmir, and has been in Pakistani hands since 1948. As a result of the ongoing conflict over Kashmir, the local population in Baltistan has seen its traditional routes of communication,

¹ By the Greater Himalayan Region I understand the Himalayas, the Tibetan Plateau, the Karakorums, and the Hindu Kush.

trade, and migration to southern Kashmir cut since the division. The Siachen glazier always blocked access to the east, but in addition links with Yarkand, in the Chinese province of Xinjiang, were severed after the communist take-over of China in 1949. Thereafter, Baltistan became a *cul de sac*, accessible only from lowland Pakistan via high altitude mountain passes, and only for 3 to 5 months a year.

Map 1 Baltistan in the political landscape

The princely state of Kashmir (pre-1947)



The divided Kashmir territory, 2006



Then, starting in the late 1960s, the 1,300 km Karakorum Highway was built, an engineering masterpiece that connected the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, with Kashgar in north-western China. By the early 1980s, Baltistan's district capital, Skardu, was connected by an all-year access route, along the Indus riverbed to the Karakorum Highway. Since then link roads have been constructed throughout Baltistan, connecting most valleys to Skardu and thus to the Pakistani road network. The journey to the Pakistani plains has been manageable in just over 24 hours, down from three weeks prior to Partition, and moreover unhindered by seasonal and physical constraints.

These highly improved means of access and communication are, it can be argued, part of a territorialisation process, planned and implemented by the Pakistani government with the aim to exercise control over Pakistani-held Kashmir: Pakistani armed forces are numerous and highly visible throughout Baltistan; Urdu, the official language of Pakistan, is taught in local schools; and the population increasingly feeds on supplies of staple foods imported from the lowlands of Pakistan².

What does this mean for the population of Baltistan? Integration, marginalisation, domination, dependence – these are all keywords which serve to categorise and label different aspects of this development experience according to well-established theoretical frameworks. But they do nothing to explain the actual strategies and practices whereby the local population relates to the territorialisation process in the construction of their livelihoods.

Nor are these questions, which are likely to be answered within existing traditions of mountain research. Images of mountain communities as islands, havens, or refuges have nourished the idea of populations confined to, and often defined by, specific natural resource bases. Focus on the utilisation of that specific resource base has often turned definition into typology, as terminologies developed in one mountain region are used to categorise mountain production systems in other parts of the world (Rhoades and Thompson 1975, Guillet 1983), e.g. the application of 'Alpwirtschaft' to characterise farming systems in the Northern Areas of Pakistan (Snoy 1993). In Baltistan, recent studies have been concerned with site-specific analyses of the processes of adaptation, contestation and negotiation related to the control of natural resources (MacDonald 1994, Nyborg 2002, Schmidt 2000, Schickhoff 1995). These are enquiries which, by and large, have been informed and demarcated by the habitat, the immediate physical environment, and whereas they provide insights into strategies and practices linked to agricultural

² Despite the very heavy Pakistani imprint, it has remained a doctrine of the Pakistani government that the Northern Areas retains its designation as an internationally disputed area.

production and natural resource management in specific locations, they do not attempt to locate the enquiries within a larger political and economic picture. What in an Andean context has been referred to as a kaleidoscopic perspective (Paerregaard 1997: 20) – a reluctance to take into consideration the broader national context – is also a criticism that is even more valid in the Greater Himalayan Region, particularly Baltistan, where the political landscape has been entirely transformed since 1947.

1.1 Understanding migration

The most tangible and visible impact of the integration of Baltistan within Pakistan is the emergence of a road network that has been gradually expanding since the early 1980s, so that the vast majority of villages in Baltistan now are accessible by motorised transport and access routes to lowland Pakistan are unhindered by seasonal constraints. Though the road network was established in order to facilitate access of Pakistani armed forces to contested border areas, it has opened up new opportunities to the local population. It has become possible for the Balti population to expand their spatial and temporal room for manoeuvre, as (male) Balti migrants are enabled to pursue livelihood opportunities in lowland Pakistan. But the nature of this migration remains largely unexplored.

The more well-documented understanding of Pakistani labour migration is linked to the way in which migrants from especially Azad Kashmir and Punjab have left the country in several waves since the end of the 1940s (Ballard 1983, 1987, Addleton 1992). Migration to Great Britain during the 1950s and 1960s – a gradual process which over time involved entire families and communities – has been the subject of especially anthropological research, focusing on the nature of the emerging migrant communities and on the networks linking the migrants to the sending communities (Watson 1977, Werbner 1989). Migration to the Gulf States started in the mid-1970s, but involved far higher numbers, usually men on their own. At its peak in the late 1980s, it was estimated that 11 % of the Pakistani population, mostly low income households, had benefited directly from migration to the Gulf States (Noman 1991: 83). This latter form of migration has been attributed to both the core-periphery relations within a world system, with Pakistan as the peripheral source of cheap labour, and to the understanding of the migrant as an extension of a household firmly based in Pakistan. These explanations should be seen in light of the nature of the migration, as most migrants to the Gulf are employed on time-limited, though extendable contracts, and without the option of bringing their families along (Addleton 1992).

In comparison, migration within Pakistan's borders is an area that has attracted much less attention in terms of research (Selier 1988 and 1991, Hastings and Werbner 1991). Present day internal migration patterns in Pakistan have largely evolved since Partition in 1947, when existing migration routes within the larger British India were curtailed, and new routes emerged within the parameters of the emerging Pakistani state. Unsurprisingly, given the pressure on agricultural land and the high proportion of landless rural households, rural-urban migration has been most common throughout the country. While the overall Pakistani population increased by 250 % in the period 1947-81, the urban population grew by close to 400%, and by 1998 32.5% of the population were living in urban areas (Government of Pakistan 1999), compared with 28.3% in 1981.

The assumptions behind explanations of domestic migration in Pakistan tend to be that the majority of those migrating are labour migrants pushed out from their native environments due to economic hardship and landlessness, or pulled by what was seen as actual or supposed opportunities in the cities due to rapid industrialisation. Analyses of these forms of migration have mostly been based on secondary data such as statistics and census data, thus without the necessary detail to focus on individual migrant trajectories, and without the ability to integrate data from the migrant's point of origin with data concerning the actual migrant experience. There has been a tendency to reduce migration to the mobility of labour, and for the mobility of labour to be reduced to an analysis of its quantified forms. Accordingly, the migration phenomenon has not been considered in relation to other important factors, such as specific regional situations (Lefebvre 1999: 2).

The analysis of migration at village-level is a step towards a more nuanced understanding of the migration phenomenon through a focus on local factors which macro-oriented studies are not able to capture. However, an analysis of migration that is situated in the 'sending community' alone is likely to result in an interpretation of migration only in terms of the priorities of this specific site, and thus an assessment of migration based on its tangible end result, the accumulation of financial resources for subsistence or investment purposes, for example. This perspective implicitly sees the migrant as a temporarily absent household member, whose activities are interpreted in terms of the priorities of his or her household. It is also a perspective that ignores migration as a process where social relations are stretched out across time and space, with different members of multi-placed households experiencing different constraints and opportunities.

1.2 Objectives and research questions

This study wants to contribute to an understanding of the strategies and practices whereby a mountain population structures their livelihoods in the contact zone between the mountain environment and the territorialising regime which serves to situate the mountain community within the parameters of a specific political economy. I will argue that most previous studies of mountain societies have operated with an understanding of the population as spatially fixed communities, dependent on the utilisation and control of vertical ecological zones. They have failed to take into account the role played by the shifting definitions and configurations of horizontal space as a result of the domination and control exercised by territorial regimes. I suggest that mountain livelihoods must be understood both in relation to the constraints and opportunities posed by the physical environment and in relation to wider political, cultural and economic contexts.

In order to establish this understanding I intend to pursue two different but highly integrated levels of analytical enquiry. The first level addresses the ‘larger story’, which concerns the nature of the process of territorialisation whereby Baltistan is being incorporated into Pakistan. By territorialisation I mean the production of space where the state attempts to create order and homogeneity at the national level by establishing localised institutions and practices, which serve to manifest and legitimise the state. Though the means via which this territorialisation process is carried out can be identified relatively easily in Baltistan, the implications for ‘the territorialised ones’, the local population, are less clear-cut. Is territorialisation ‘only’ an imposition of a regime that controls a geographical area and the people living there, or does the local population make use of the territorialisation process in the structuring of their livelihoods? This question calls for the enquiry provided by the second level of analysis. This consists of the ‘smaller stories’, comprising the livelihoods and migration practices of the Balti population in Thalay valley in south-eastern Baltistan. By analysing local livelihood strategies it becomes possible to build an understanding of both the processes whereby the local population adapts to the constraints of the physical environment and the means whereby the territorialisation process impacts at the local level. It thereby becomes possible to ‘ground’ the ‘larger story’ of the territorialisation process as well as examine how it affects local livelihoods.

The focus on the migration practices, in which the Balti population engages, constitutes a central part of the ‘smaller stories’. By siting the enquiry in both Baltistan and Karachi, it becomes possible to extend the analysis of migration from a practice defined by and measured against the priorities of the mountain community, to a more open-ended process where the migration activity

is seen in terms of the actual circumstances faced by the migrant. The focus becomes the migrant as an individual actor constrained and enabled by both his/her specific social unit and the overall political and economic context.

With these considerations in mind, the specific objective of this study is: With particular emphasis on the period under Pakistani rule, I aim to examine through what forms of control and authority territorialising regimes have conditioned livelihoods and migration practices in Baltistan, and how the rural population has 'worked with' the regimes and incorporated these conditioning practices into their livelihood strategies and migration practices.

In order to facilitate the study, I have formulated a number of research questions, which I will use to direct my research in Thalay valley in Baltistan and among migrants from Thalay who live in Karachi.

What is the nature of the territorialisation process in Thalay, and how does this condition the livelihoods of the population in the valley?

How are migration practices integrated into livelihood strategies in Thalay?

Which are the causes and socio-economic consequences of migration from Thalay to Karachi, and how are links between migrants in Karachi and their households in Thalay reproduced?

1.3 Structure of the dissertation

Chapter One is this introductory chapter.

Chapter Two presents the conceptual framework. It consists of two parts. In the first, traditional conceptualisations of mountain environments are described and discussed, and the concept of territorialisation is presented in order to create a conceptual framework that integrates both horizontal and vertical dimensions of mountain livelihoods. In the second part, conventional approaches to migration are presented, and work by Giddens is outlined in order to offer an alternative conceptualisation of migration as a 'problem of order' in social systems, linked to the nature of, and control over, allocative and authoritative resources.

Chapter Three provides the analytical and methodological framework. The analytical framework comprises a discussion of the nature and applicability of the livelihoods concept, a presentation

of the analytical units, and a discussion of the multi-local approach. The methodological framework summarises the design of the fieldwork in Thalay Valley, presents the methodologies applied to fieldwork and data analysis, and discusses the weaknesses of the approach.

Chapter Four presents the background to the empirical analysis. It presents and discusses the most prominent elements of the territorialisation process whereby the Pakistani state is configuring the space it controls, and it does so with particular emphasis on the Northern Areas, the northern-most part of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir that includes Baltistan.

Chapter Five is the first empirical chapter, and comprises an analysis of livelihood strategies in the Thalay Valley in Baltistan. Following the outline suggested in the conceptual framework, the chapter is divided into a *vertical* section and a *horizontal* section respectively. The vertical section provides an analysis of agro-pastoral practices based on the utilisation of the vegetation zones within the valley. The horizontal section concentrates on an analysis of how local livelihoods integrate the elements of Pakistani territorialisation which were presented in the previous chapter.

Chapter Six concentrates on migration practices in Thalay. After a short introductory account of Balti migration practices from a historical perspective, the empirical analysis of the Thalay migration practices is presented. In the organisation of the data, an analytical distinction is made between seasonal migration practices, and migration that has less of a predetermined time frame.

Chapter Seven provides an introduction to Karachi. Within the overall economic and cultural context of the city of Karachi, the basic characteristics of the Balti migrant community are presented in order to provide a background for the analysis of the livelihoods of migrants from Thalay.

Chapter Eight comprises the analysis of migration from Thalay to Karachi. Through exploration of individual migrant trajectories, motivational factors behind the initial moves as well as the determinants behind long-term stays in the city are identified. By including data from migrants, who have returned to Thalay, a multi-dimensional perspective is also presented.

Chapter nine presents the conclusion where the answers to the research questions presented in chapter one are reviewed.

Chapter Two

Theoretical framework

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to develop a theoretical framework for the study of livelihood strategies and migration practices in the Greater Himalayan Region. It is a region, which has undergone considerable changes during the second half of the 20th century, as most of it has been taken over by the three emerging regional powers: India, China and Pakistan. Territorial claims have been underpinned by military presence, extensive road construction has taken place all over the region, replacing foot paths with paved roads, and trans-local government institutions have been established in order to create, strengthen or enforce bonds with the larger territorial state.

This changing reality of Himalayan mountain communities has not been sufficiently well reflected in conceptual and empirical work. At the same time as a *topography of power* is developed, negotiated, and at times fought into place in the Himalayan mountains, understandings of mountain populations are still by and large informed by a *power of topography*³ which sees mountain livelihoods explained through analyses of the ways in which mountain populations utilise and manage the natural resources available in the particular mountain habitat, the immediate physical environment. However, alternative perspectives,

³ I owe these descriptive terms to Gupta and Ferguson who introduced them in their discussion of anthropological conceptualisations of *place* and *space* (Gupta and Ferguson 1997)

focusing on the macro-level, can be equally reductionist. They are often structuralist conceptualisations where geographical entities are categorised according to their internal relationship, with industrial or commercial lowland cores extracting labour resources from the mountain periphery, thereby aggravating already existing inequalities.

The dominating trends in migration theory may – despite considerable differences within the field – also be seen as related to structuralist understandings. Whereas there is no such thing as *one* theory on migration, there has within both micro and macro-level perspectives been a tendency to interpret migration as moves between sites as a result of actual or perceived income potentials. Such interpretations often fail to take into account other non-economic properties of the enabling environments, and analytical frameworks are often not designed with due consideration to the complexities of the process whereby the migrant is enveloped in a new economic and cultural environment, while also reproducing social relations with home.

Based on these introductory considerations, the objectives of this chapter can be stated: The first objective is to present and re-examine established models of mountain livelihoods, based on analyses of the immediate physical environment of mountain populations, and to discuss how more recent contributions which introduce the concept of the territorialising regime can further a conceptualisation of mountain populations that integrates both vertical ecology and the shifting configurations of horizontal space, which are attributable to a specific political economy.

The second objective is to discuss the explanatory value of conventional migration theories, and to identify areas where newer theoretical works can contribute to an understanding of migration as an open-ended process. By introducing conceptual tools developed within the frameworks of structuration theory and transnationalism, I aim to develop an approach that integrates social and cultural aspects of the migration process within an overall understanding of the specific political and economic context of that process.

2.1 The habitat school

Like islands, mountain regions have historically been perceived as physically secluded areas, with mountain populations usually defined by their specific physical environment. This perception dates back to the determinism advocated by Ratzel in the late 19th century: “Mountains produce isolation and cultural stability, while lowlands promote racial and cultural mixture and migration” (Ratzel 1889, in Moran 1982). Ratzel portrayed mountain areas as demarcated high altitude islands, the populations of which lived in quasi timeless pockets: “In

den Gebirgstälern wohnen Völkchen menschenalterlang wie auf Inseln, abgeschlossen vom Verkehr und ohne Wunsch, nach aussen zu wirken. Sie bilden Völkerinseln voll Eigentümlichem, das aus erhalten gebliebenem Alten und in der Abgeschiedenheit herangekeimten Neuen in Sprache, Religion und Sitte sich seltsam mischt" (Ratzel 1909: 283)⁴. The natural determinism inherent in Ratzel's approach has never been entirely abandoned, but rather qualified and modified; Allan argues that Ratzel's models of mountain environments formed the dominant paradigm of mountain society and habitat until recently (Allan 1995). Understandings of mountain livelihoods have therefore traditionally operated with an implicit assumption of the habitat of a population as a fixed boundary, and hence it has been the characteristics and use of this habitat that has constituted the subject of investigation.

Dating back to the research carried out by Alexander von Humboldt in South America in the early 19th century, mountain environments have been explained in relation to their physical properties, as manifested in a variety of altitudinally-defined vegetation zones, resulting from what has been termed "...a three-dimensional analysis of climate, vegetation and landscapes as a basis for comparative mountain studies" (Troll 1988: 38, see also Troll 1961, 1972). As vegetation cover may be considered a function of the interplay of physical factors, the altitudinal zonation in mountain regions is expressed as a number of different vegetation zones, each of which is seen to have a distinct agro-ecological potential that can be utilised by a human population (Uhlig 1975, 1995). Mountain populations were, therefore, considered 'functions' of these zones. They have been described and classified according to the mechanisms by which they have adapted to their particular vegetation zones, and concepts developed in one geographical area have been used as tools and explanatory models in other mountain regions that have similar natural resource bases. Similarly, analyses comparing different mountain regions of the world have concentrated on common traits of local resource utilisation rather than explore mountain communities within wider political and economic dynamics (Rhoades and Thompson 1975, Guillet 1983).

Later approaches have maintained this analytical demarcation, but moved the enquiry from the potential of a habitat to the human actor as an agent of choice, who acts purposively to his/her habitat in order to make a living. Within the realm of cultural ecology, focus has been on human behaviour: "a study of how and why humans use Nature, how they incorporate Nature into Society, and what they do to themselves, Nature and Society in the process" (Bennett 1976: 3).

⁴ "In mountain valleys, peoples live for generations like on islands, cut off and without the wish to engage with the outside. They create exceptional people-islands, which are based on old, established ways and cut-off from newer influences, thus rarely mixing with others in terms of language, religion and customs" (translated by the author).

But this stress on feedback mechanisms also implies that short-term human use of natural resources is conditioned by long-term human dependence on the same natural resource base, thus emphasizing the equilibrium aspect of cultural adaptation to physical environments (Netting 1981, Allan 1991) and, implicitly, the understanding that mountain livelihoods are ‘closed systems’.

However, adaptive strategies are not static, but dynamic responses aimed at meeting certain objectives defined by the demands of a population. In reality, however, analyses of adaptive behaviour in mountain environments have tended to operate within the immediate environment of the population (Stevens 1993, Guillet 1983), thus focusing on empirical issues or problems related to environmental degradation rather than more general contributions to theories of adaptation (Fricke 1989: 133).

2.1.1 Outgrowing the habitat

The demands of mountain populations have been changing, however. The three elements of population dynamics - births, deaths, and migration – have traditionally more or less balanced each other in mountain environments, so that population growth rates have remained static or very low (Sharma and Banskota 1992). But this is no longer the case in the Himalayas, as an annual growth rate of just 1% in the period 1901 to 1951 has doubled in the period 1951 to 1981, resulting in a population increase of 83% within these 30 years, and the Himalayan population is likely to double within the next 20-30 years (Kreutzmann 1993, Sharma and Banskota 1992). This ‘demographic threat’ triggered the first attempts to look at the larger picture, leading to the development of the ‘Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation’ (Eckholm 1975, Ives and Messerli 1987), a ‘doom and gloom’ scenario advocated during the 1970s and based on a perceived environmental crisis in the Himalayan mountains, mainly Nepal (Allan 1995). Increases in mountain ‘hazards’, as increasing run-off resulted in landslides, were seen as the causes of floods on the plains of the Indian subcontinent. These increases were considered a result of degradation of the mountain environments caused by a deforestation that was attributable to the needs of a rapidly growing population. A ‘tragedy of the commons’ was in the making, as “...villagers must roam farther and farther from their homes to gather fodder and firewood, thus surrounding most villages with a widening circle of denuded hillsides” (Eckholm 1975: 764). This notion of a ‘tragedy’ was based on a limited number of observations rather than systematic data collection, and since then this scenario has lost much of its momentum due to conflicting evidence on the scale of the problem and the failure to distinguish between environmental degradation deriving from human activities and the results of natural physical

erosive processes (Ives and Messerli 1987).

Much of the reasoning behind the 'Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation' stemmed from the idea that mountain populations are sustained by a specific limited resource base, and that population growth therefore inevitably leads to over-exploitation of that resource base. It has been a generally-held assumption that if the Himalayan people are to have enough food, the Himalayan land must produce enough to feed them. But this assumption has been energetically refuted: "An examination of these mountain societies and habitats reveals a historic failure to maintain anything like what ecologists are fond of calling equilibrium" (Allan 1991: 68). It has been found that food needs are satisfied once people are in a position to *command* enough food (Ives and Messerli 1987: 342). Accordingly, it has been argued that rather than the resources of a given area, research focus should be on access to resources, defined as "...the ability of an individual, family, group, class, or community to use resources which are directly required to secure a livelihood" (Blaikie 1994: 48). A major implication of this is a shift of analytical orientation from the carrying capacity of a specific environment to the activities, which the population living in that environment undertake in order to sustain an existence.

2.1.2 New approaches to mountain environments

As suggested above, the understanding of mountain populations has largely been based on an understanding of space in such contexts as being a closed and isolated "container" of action and interaction. As Stellrecht puts it in the context of Northern Pakistan: "Isolation has evidently turned into a category of its own, independent of every personal experience, and linked to a 'view from afar', from the lowlands to the highlands, from the familiar and seemingly unlimited possibilities of life in the 'open' plains towards a mountain world that is perceived to be threatening, strange and hostile, and therefore 'closed' (Stellrecht 1997: 21-22). But this assumption of isolation of seemingly marginal areas is problematic. As Wilmsen states of the Kalahari Desert, a different context where the physical environment is also seen to play a major role: "It is not possible to speak of the Kalahari's isolation, protected by its own distances. To those inside, the outside whatever 'outside' there may have been at any moment - was always present" (Wilmsen 1989: 157). Isolation is therefore a category of perception, often imposed by those from the 'outside'.

Within the literature on mountain populations, there is also often a focus on perceived uniqueness that arises from mountain spaces being seen as isolated and closed. Stemming from a focus on place and distinctiveness, the primary concern of traditional analysis of mountain populations is

to understand how the localities in which they live come to be as they are, and how these environments determine the particular nature of livelihoods and society that then develop (Massey 1992: 9). It is a perspective that can be likened to ‘the little community’, which Redfield terms a ‘cradle-to-the-grave arrangement’, a distinct entity consisting of a largely homogenous population (Redfield 1955: 4) and characterised by a moral consensus, by the conformity of all individuals to a common type (ibid: 142). It is a perspective that has also been characterised as a ‘metaphysics of sedentarism’, which serves to ‘root’ people in specific sites, bearing group-specific properties that allows them to be studied as a unit, living in one place and bearing a unique, identifiable culture (Malkki 1997, Glick Schiller et al 1992). What such analyses usually ignore in many mountain contexts are the frequent links of the ‘little community’ with the wider world and the effects these have.

Therefore, whilst Baltistan and Ladakh constitute ecologically similar environments, this does not explain why the native languages of both populations are Tibetan dialects. Nor does it explain why the former is strictly Muslim, while the latter is predominantly Buddhist, or why interaction between the two areas has ceased since 1947. The explanation for these similarities and differences lies not simply in exploring the local ecology, but in understanding the historiography and politics of external and internal linkages, and the wider historical processes of territorial control and domination. Where traditional conceptualisations of mountain populations and their livelihoods have tended to emphasize *the power of topography*, there is increasingly a realisation that the evolving *topography of power* must be accounted for.

2.2 Territorialisation: states, space and control

“The initial basis or foundation of social space is nature ... Upon this basis are superimposed – in ways that transform, supplant or even threaten to destroy it – successive stratified and tangled networks which, though material in form, nevertheless have an existence beyond their materiality: paths, roads, railways, telephone links, and so on” (Lefebvre 1991: 402-3).

Central to the concept of territorialisation is the notion of an agent with the capacity to control, or the aim of controlling, a given geographical area and superimpose mechanisms or institutions which can exercise this control. Territoriality can thus be defined as the “...attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (Sack 1986, in Vandergeist and Lee Peluso 1995: 387-88).

What follows from this is a linkage between territoriality and power and, by extension, a focus on the state as the primary territorialising agent. This also leans on the Weberian definition of the state as a political organisation that claims and upholds a monopoly on the legitimate use of power within a given territory. Following what is basically an understanding of space as socially produced, the state can be conceptualised as historically constructed in the nexus between global and domestic/local social relations, fundamentally comprising two aspects: the exercise of power through a set of central political institutions; and the clear demarcation of the territory within which the state exercises its power (Agnew and Corbridge 1995: 78). What then emerges is a demarcation of space, which reflects how territorial states claim spaces and makes them theirs, and, by extension, an understanding of global space as subdivided between different territorial states, each of which imposes its own stamp on the territory under its control.

In his discussion of ‘state power’, Mann distinguishes between two types: *despotic power* of the state elite, defined as “... the range of actions which the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalised negotiation with civil society groups (Mann 1984: 188); and *infrastructural power*, which refers to “...capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm” (ibid: 189). Whereas both types of power can be traced in history, Mann argues that it is a characteristic of state power of the present day that the capacity of states to exercise infrastructural power has increased enormously (ibid), often due to highly improved technologies of control, transportation, and communication. Along a similar line, Scott describes the ‘premodern state’ as “...partially blind; it knew precious little about its subjects, their wealth, their land holdings and yields, their location, their very identity” (Scott 1998: 2). In contrast, the modern states would generally work to homogenise their populations and break down their segmentation by imposing common languages, religions, currencies, and legal systems, as well as promoting the construction of connected systems of trade, transportation, and communication (ibid: 82)⁵.

However, the primacy and permeability of the territorial state is not a trans-historical given, but is a historically and geographically contingent one, specific to different historical epochs and different world regions (Agnew 1994: 70, Agnew and Corbridge 1995: 5). It is only in the 20th century that territorial states have become central to an understanding of what a society is, as the

⁵ In his work “Seeing like a state”, Scott analyses how “...processes as disparate as the creation of permanent last names, the standardisation of weights and measures, the establishment of cadastral surveys and population registers, the invention of freehold tenure, the standardisation of language and legal discourse, the design of cities, and the organisation of transportation seemed comprehensible as attempts at legibility and simplification” (Scott 1998: 2).

territoriality of the state has “...created social forces with a life of their own” (Mann 1984: 210). This has often lead to an understanding of the territorial state as being synonymous with the nation-state, thereby endowing the former with the legitimacy of representing the character or will of the nation (Agnew and Corbridge 1995: 83). Through what Radcliffe in a South American context terms “...a systematic production of a geographical imagination” (Radcliffe 2001, in Hansen and Stepputat 2001: 10-11) the space of the state is domesticated as the proper place of the nation – to the extent that it takes over, or surpasses, pre-existing institutions. For instance, Durkheim saw the territorial state as both the creator and guarantor of an individual’s ‘natural’ rights against the claims of local, household and communal groups (in Agnew and Corbridge 1995: 93). This has lead to the assumption of the territorial state as the *longue duree*, existing prior to and as a container of society, and herein lies what Agnew refers to as the territorial trap: “In idealising the territorial state we cannot see a world in which its role and meaning change” (Agnew 1994: 77).

There is therefore a risk of jumping from one definitional container to another – from the “little community”, contained within itself and its habitat, to the understanding of territorial states as billiard balls, “...with the qualities of internally homogenous and externally distinctive bounded objects” (Wolf 1982: 14). In her discussion of the role of the state in the Peruvian Andes, Wilson aims to avoid this trap by using the concept of *the territorialising regime* in an attempt to capture what she terms the materialised, spatialised characteristics of a particular kind of political economy.

“A territorialising regime can be defined as a non-scale specific, spatial/political construct. As a *regime*, some form of centralised political organisation is assumed to exist within a political field whose hegemonic authority rests on shared understandings as to the ideas, rules, practices and contests structuring the political game” (Wilson 2004: 136).

It is important to stress the processual aspect of this concept. Wilson describes territorialisation as an “endless process, a process without closure, in which claims to political/social space constantly are being brought into play” (Wilson 2004: 136). The state, as a territorial regime, is under constant reconstruction, advancing in some regions, but not quite succeeding in capturing others – as evidenced through the cumbersome state-building process in Afghanistan, the ongoing confrontations between government forces and Maoist guerrillas in Nepal, or the regime changes in the Peruvian Andes, on which Wilson focuses.

In summary, territorialisation constitutes a production of space whereby the state seeks to create

order at the national scale by implanting localised offices and practices in which the state is instantiated, thereby becoming a trans-local presence (Gupta 1995: 375-76). However, as the examples referred to above suggest, territorialisation is not necessarily a straightforward process. How is the state perceived by the population that is being territorialised? Who does it represent? As Gupta concludes: “Rather than taking the notion of the state as a point of departure, we should leave open the analytical question as to the conditions under which the state *does* operate as a cohesive and unitary whole” (Gupta 1995: 392). What logically follows must then also be an enquiry into the objectives of the territorialisation and, consequently, an analysis of the means whereby these objectives are achieved.

2.2.1 From concept to context: Territorialisation in the Greater Himalayan Region

In order to ‘ground’ the discussion of the territorialising regime, relate it to the previous exploration of the evolving conceptualisations of mountain environments, and eventually outline a conceptual approach to mountain livelihoods, I will now briefly discuss the process of territorialisation in a Himalayan context.

As stated by Wilson, the process of territorialisation is an open-ended one. Processes of domination and claims for political control can, at the local level, be traced very far back in history. In the context of the Greater Himalayan Region, the political landscape has been seen as dominated by numerous small, autarkic states characterised by limited infrastructural powers, and often with the single aim of controlling their territory and extract a revenue (Allan 1991).

As Britain consolidated its power on the Indian subcontinent during the 18th. century, most of the mountainous area north of the Indian plains was considered a blank on the map⁶. Then, after explorations in the mid-19th. century (Hopkirk 1990, Keay 1993), the Karakorum-Hindu Kush range came to be seen as a welcome buffer that could keep the Russians out of India in the discretely fought contest in Central Asia that has become known as ‘The Great Game’. What resulted from this largely un-bloody confrontation was a relatively stable situation.

This status quo changed dramatically after Partition in 1947, with the new states of India and Pakistan being at odds over the future of Kashmir from the outset. The emergence of the

² One of the major factors triggering The Great Game was lack of knowledge about the entire Himalayan mountain range: “The whole of the intervening country between India and China is a blank; and of that which separates India from Russia, the knowledge which we possess is but in a very slight degree the result of modern European scholarship and is for the most part either unauthentic or obsolete” (Wilson 1840, in Keay 1993: 10-11).

People's Republic of China in 1949 added another stakeholder in the battle for control of the Himalayas. So rather than a barrier, separating conflicting interests, the buffer zone became contested, as the Himalayan mountain region came to constitute an interest sphere for emerging hegemonic projects. In this recasting of The Great Game, gaining access became an imperative throughout the entire Himalayan region, necessary to facilitate military presence: "The strategic importance of the border regions in the mountain arc has to be judged as the driving force behind development of physical infrastructure" (Kreutzmann 1995: 219), in particular roads and bridges. Inevitably perhaps, given the easier access and the uncertainties and conflicts over borderlines, the contest has led to several armed conflicts between India and Pakistan (1947-48, 1965, and 1999) and between India and China (1962).

Territorialisation is, as Wilson suggested, "a process without closure" (Wilson 2004: 136), and different regimes are still contesting parts of the Great Himalayan Region, as evidenced during 2006 in the conflict between government and Maoist forces in Nepal. But the question of relevance here is how such territorialisation processes effect the populations of these contested mountain regions. Traditional access routes have been cut off – e.g. across the line of control separating Indian- and Pakistani-held Kashmir, or between Tibet and Sikkim – and new ones established, as mountain populations have become part of territorial states. What are the impacts of these processes, as previously autarkic societies have been integrated within territorial states? Generally, assessments of economic and political development in mountain regions are mixed. They have been termed a "Janus-headed process of modernisation *versus* marginalisation" (Libiszewski and Bächler 1997: 120). Many see processes of modernisation resulting in the marginalisation of mountain peoples: "On the one hand, in many regions, the living standard of the mountain peoples has improved considerably, on the other, a reduction of economic and social autonomy, together with cultural alienation, have contributed to a new economic vulnerability and the decline in traditions and cultural identity" (Grötzbach and Stadel 1997: 35). As access to formerly 'isolated' regions is established, these also turn marginal in relation to political and economic mainstreams, and the local population become minorities within broader, national contexts (Kreutzmann 1995). The population of Northern Areas, controlled by Pakistan, thus constitutes less than 1% of the total Pakistani population. As Bandhyopadhyay concludes: "If there is any Himalayan dilemma, it is around this issue of the management of accessibility and ways of guarding against the marginalisation of the Himalayan people" (Bandhyopadhyay 1990: 116).

This is a valid conclusion, but it also reflects an understanding of space as structural, as mountain regions and lowlands are seen as having spatial characteristics that result from their interaction or

relationship with one another. Accordingly the mountain area is no longer seen as ‘isolated’, but as marginal in relation to lowland core areas. As Wolf suggests, “the concept of the ‘periphery’ remains as much a cover term as ‘traditional society’. Its advantage over the older term lies chiefly in its implications: it points to wider linkages that must be investigated if the processes at work in the periphery are to be understood” (Wolf 1982: 23).

2.2.2 Towards a model of mountain livelihoods

The habitat approach and the territorialisation approach represent two fundamentally different ways of conceptualising mountain environments, but each holds its own ‘territorial trap’: The habitat school reduces mountain livelihoods to an analysis of resource availability and utilisation within a specific physical environment; the geopolitical approach imposes an organisation of space in territorial states, assuming a degree of internal homogeneity. I believe that there is a need to challenge both perspectives and integrate what has been described as the two interactive worlds of rural life in a mountain context: “The *vertical* world of production, tenure, and environmental relations that links an individual or a community to a particular place, and the *horizontal* world of institutions, markets, and political economy that form a nested hierarchy of spatial units extending from the farmstead to the nation and beyond” (Zurick 1993: 36).

Fig. 2.1 Mountain livelihoods

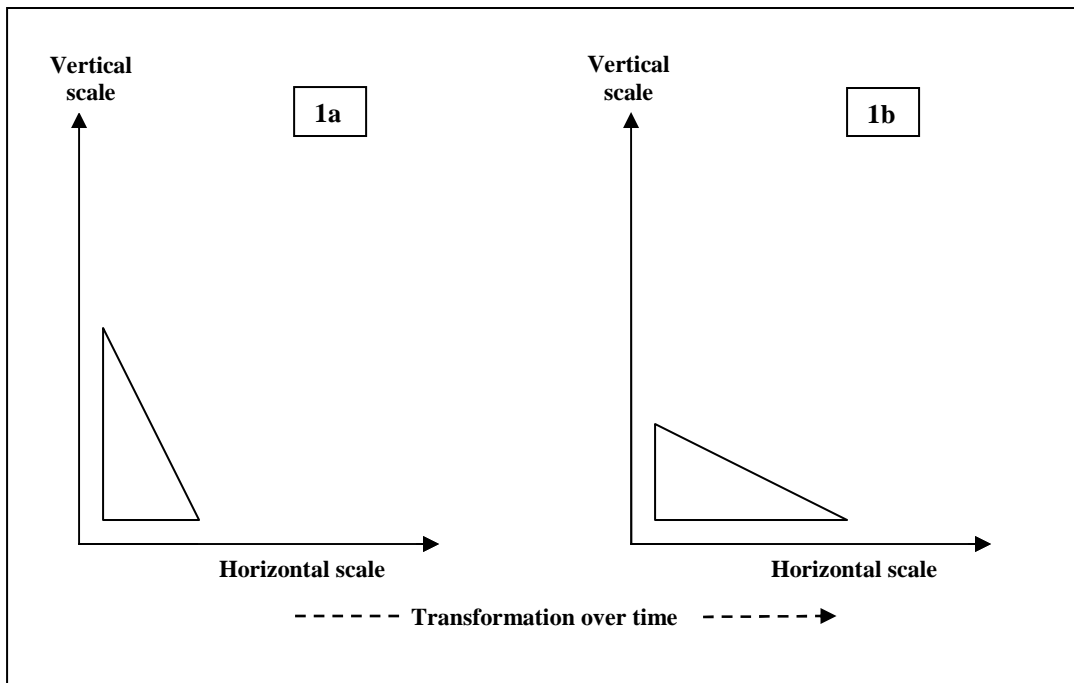


Figure 2.1 illustrates my hypothesis concerning the transformation process, which mountain livelihoods may undergo over time, with the two triangles representing the spatial distribution of livelihood activities. 1a represents an understanding of mountain livelihood in terms of the exploitation of the vertical vegetation zones accessible to a mountain population. This may include different types of ‘Alpwirtschaft’, agro-pastoral strategies, or the exchange of resources between mountain populations living in different vertical zones. In this way 1a also depicts the habitat-based conceptualisations of mountain livelihoods. What the transformation process proposes is a situation where livelihoods increasingly will become based on engagement with opportunities and resources at the horizontal level, as sketched in 2.1(b). The nature of these opportunities are conditioned by the constraining or enabling actions characteristic of the specific process of territorialisation. For example, the construction of a road network may enable the population to pursue livelihood opportunities further away from the village community.

It must be stressed that the proposed model provides only a very rough outline of the transformation process, as it is highly contingent on the actual political and cultural context, and certainly developed with the purpose of raising awareness of the transformation process rather than attempting to calibrate it in any way. It must be stressed that there is no such thing as *one* transformation process, but rather a number of related processes. As it has been documented in a number of studies, the gradual abandonment of the upper vertical zones is often linked to a shift away from dependence on livestock – for example through mechanisation of farming practices and the introduction of chemical fertilisers (Streefland et al 1995, Stöber 2001). But in some mountain environments, such as the Alps and some parts of the Himalayas, the utilisation of these high altitude zones has merely taken on a different nature, as they become the base for leisure-related activities – for example tourism, mountaineering, etc. This both constitutes an increased engagement with the horizontal level, as mountain environments become more accessible to outsiders, and a continued, but significantly different utilisation of the vertical zones.

Similarly, a gendered analysis is likely to render a different picture, contingent on the actual cultural and religious context. In strongly Islamic mountain communities, the spatial characteristics of male and female livelihood practices are likely to become increasingly different and separated by distance as a result of the transformation process. Accordingly figure 2.1 may can represent not only the transformation process, but the livelihood space occupied by women(a) and men (b) respectively. As has often been observed, women’s room for manoeuvre basically stays the same, as ‘keepers of traditionalism’ occupied with tasks within or near the homestead (Hewitt 1989), whereas men are able to pursue opportunities outside the traditional realm.

In summary, given the nature of territorialisation and the population growth in the Greater Himalayan Region since 1947, the one defining aspect of the transformation process is the increasing importance of the horizontal level, including both the specific, localised nature of the process of territorialisation and the locally evolving livelihood opportunities and mobility practices of the mountain populations. But it is important that an analysis of mountain livelihoods does not treat mountain population merely as subjects of a territorialisation process, but that the analysis carefully establishes both the nature of the specific territorialisation process and the strategies and practices whereby individual actors utilise aspects of this process in the structuring of their livelihoods.

2.3 Migration theories

Migration has been defined as the act of “moving from one country, place, or locality to another” (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, in Sørensen and Olwig 2002: 4). It is hard to disagree with this definition, but it does provoke more questions than it answers. Is the move a definitive one? Is it linked up with a return to ‘home’, or does it involve a complete change of location? If so, does it pertain only to individuals or a whole household unit; or does the initial move result in a multi-placement, an expansion of the space for personal or familial livelihood practices to two or more localities (Sørensen and Olwig 2002: 5). These are questions, which suggest that the biggest challenge in migration research might be to agree on what it is all about. In the following I will present and discuss different conceptualisations of migration and eventually present the my own approach

Traditional migration studies – carried out both within the structural and the functional tradition – have tended to interpret migration as largely the result of economic differences between the ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ areas. They have also tended to view migration in terms of unilineal and finite movements between a point of origin and a point of destination. It is a view of spatial mobility as an exceptional and temporary move in a natural world where people are seen as “fixed” in places and organised in household units.

Traditional migration theory interprets migration in terms of its outcome, as an exchange of resources. So migration *is* labour migration, because labour is the resource that the migrant has to offer in exchange for economic benefits. And as economic resources *are* the aim of the migrant move, the assumed availability of economic opportunities determines the direction of the move. Migration becomes a flow of labour, automatically moving in the direction where there is

demand⁷, and possible social, cultural, or political dimensions are seen as subordinated to an economic logic.

The first attempts to understand and conceptualise demographic change represented the view of migration as an aspect of modernisation. This approach grew out of dichotomies – for example *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, status and contract, mechanical and organic solidarity, with migrants seen as progressive people who, if they returned at all, would be bringing back innovations and knowledge and thus break down traditionalism (Kearney 1986). Otherwise, the migrants would be seen to adapt, assimilate and adjust, and in general lose their original rural, social, and cultural characteristics: "...the general tendency to advance in the material conditions of existence effects in the peasant an analysis of his social life, and the result of this analysis is the constitution of a systematic body of new attitudes, social in their nature, but concerning merely material values and viewed with regard to the greatest possible increase of their enjoyment by the subject" (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918: 193). First published in 1918, and based on an analysis of letters exchanged between migrants in the USA and their kin in Poland, this quotation represents the *tabula rasa* myth, which assumes that the immigrant wipes out the old and is ready to be fully socialised and assimilated into the new (Jackson 1969: 2). This has traditionally been considered one of the central aspects of the migrant practice: "Every such movement implies an element of disassociation from the usual and familiar world, a transition and an involvement with a new environment, a new context of physical space and social relationships" (ibid). But the *tabula rasa* myth, always a simplification, arose at a time and age when migration practices, like the trans-Atlantic migrations, were more likely to be unilineal and finite moves, with little prospect of return. As means of transportation and communication have developed, moves would seem less final. What follows is the need to base an understanding of migration on an analysis of the nature of the links between here and there.

In the next sections I will summarise and discuss the basic characteristics of traditional migration research, distinguishing between functional and structural approaches.

2.3.1 The functionalist approach

The first inquiries into migratory practices were inspired by the dramatic 19th century movement

⁷ The understanding of migration in terms of flows and currents dates right back to the "laws of migration" laid down by Ravenstein. Though Ravenstein did point out that "laws of population, and economic laws generally, have not the rigidity of physical laws", he comes pretty close, stating that "each main current of migration produces a compensating counter-current" (Ravenstein 1885, in Lee 1969: 283).

of people from rural areas to the newly industrialised urban centres of England (Ravenstein 1885, 1889). These studies were based on the analysis of demographic statistics and as such they focused totally on the defining features of the environments which caused this migration and the direction of the moves, which resulted in the formulation of a number of 'migratory laws' (ibid). The actual move was the consequence of a migrant responding to an unequal distribution of land, labour, capital and natural resources.

Later, in neo-classical analysis, the perspective becomes more micro-economic, with migration mainly seen as an individual or household affair. The inherent assumption is that migration results from rationalising economic forces, so that labour, like capital, moves inexorably in chase of the highest economic return (Addleton 1992: 17). The migrant is a 'homo economicus', out there to maximize, and will continue to do so as long as there are potential income differentials between respectively the place of departure and the destination. This has become known as the 'equilibrium model', as the migration is expected to continue until income potentials in both areas are equal, thus removing the incentives for continuing migrant activities.

The factors triggering these moves have often been referred to as 'push' and 'pull'. The assumption is of a population as immobile until mobilised due to external factors. Often it is the 'push' from resource poor environments at specific times in history – for example the large scale migration from Ireland and Scandinavia to North America in the 19th century, and more recently the population growth in West Africa points to a move away from the resource scarce environments in the interior, causing migration towards the coastal areas where economic development is concentrated.

However, push-pull models should not be considered a theoretical framework, but rather a means of classifying migration and ordering its (economic) determinants (Massey 1998: 11). Moreover, the emphasis on the stresses caused by the context that pushes or pulls migrants neglects the ways, in which the individual actor deals with these stresses (Halfacree and Boyle 1993: 335). Furthermore, the push-pull framework – like the entire micro-economic approach – fails to consider the socio-economic differentiation within migrant-sending villages as well as the possible strategic diversification within households. Based on observations of different types of migration practices within the same villages in Southern India, Lipton observes that 'push' and 'pull' are twin children of inequality in the same sort of village; but they are also sources of new inequality" (Lipton 1976, in de Haan and Rogaly 2002: 5).

Though the functionalist approach operates at the micro-level, and the unit of analysis is the

individual migrant, migrants – a social category structured by gender, ethnicity and social class – are treated as a mere embodiment of labour power (Cadwallader 1992:10). The assumption of migration as a result of rationalising economic forces means that it has little to contribute to an understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of the migrant practice (Gardner 1995: 10). Furthermore, the model fails to take into account political and other structural barriers to mobility, which have become increasingly important aspects of recent conceptual works, especially in relation to international migration.

In their work to refine the functionalist approach, Stark and Lucas emphasize mutual altruism as a highly specific asset, which both migrant and family are endowed with, and the value of which is realized, and thus increased, when they deal with each other, but which would be lost, if they were to deal with a third party (Stark and Lucas 1988: 469). They conclude: “We are accustomed to viewing migration as an indication that the family splits apart as the young move away and disassociate themselves from familial bondage ... our work instead emphasises the efficiency, flexibility, and what might be called the dynamic comparative advantage of the family. And it shifts the focus of migration theory from individual independence to mutual interdependence” (ibid: 478-79). Accordingly, resource diversification rather than income maximisation becomes a central explanatory variable of migration (Stark 1991).

This work provides a welcome departure from the micro-economic understanding of the migrant as a ‘homo economicus’, and it is also an attempt to contextualise the migrant move by relating it to other activities defined within the realm of the household. Problematic is that the approach would seem to operate with just one level of social interaction, namely the household, while the migrant move as such would be seen to challenge the common residence that is often seen as the defining feature of the household. Furthermore, the idea of mutual altruism can seem problematic. Though there is plenty of empirical evidence to confirm the reproduction of linkages between the migrant and his/her family unit – especially through remittances – the concept of mutual altruism implies that relations between migrant and family remain a static social system, irrespective of, and unchanged by, spatial and temporal distancing.

2.3.2 The structural approach

Where the functionalist approach to migration was developed from within the theoretical framework of modernisation, the structural approach leans heavily on dependency theory – which, in turn, emerged as a critique of modernisation theory (Kearney 1986). The micro-economic approach holds constant the very factors that are the objects of enquiry in the

historical-structural view. Whereas the micro-economic approach basically is a-historical, historical-structural theorists link migration to the macro-organisation of socio-economic relations, the geographic division of labour, and the political mechanisms of power and domination (Massey 1998).

Dependency theory has largely been incorporated into world systems analysis, which examines mechanisms for the appropriation and transfer of surplus from peripheral to surplus areas (Kearney 1986). Here migrant labour is seen on a par with capital and commodities, all of which move within a historically interdependent grid, which, according to Wallerstein, can be traced back to colonialism and the search for low-cost labour forces and cheap raw materials. Within dependency theory the periphery is seen as exploited by an imperialist core, and in this context migrants are considered passive actors in a game of global labour exchange (Frank 1967, Wallerstein 1974). For both Frank and Wallerstein, the principal aim of studying migration was to understand how the core subjugated the periphery, not to study the reaction of the micro-populations living there (Wolf 1982: 23). For instance, for mountain regions out-migration is considered a manifestation of their peripheral status, a status which is then further aggravated⁸. They are considered pools of cheap labour that can be mobilized on demand by distant urban and industrial centres (Kreutzmann 1989), and it is highly probable that 10 to 15% of the total male population of the Greater Himalayan Region at any one time are living outside their native area, 'mobilised' by the demand from core areas⁹.

The notion of an equilibrium has been replaced by the expectation of an increasing disequilibrium, as migration is seen as not only a response to the spatial inequality characteristic of underdevelopment, but also as a process by which it is reinforced, as it is often the most productive and well-educated who migrate, resulting in a geographical transfer of value, a 'brain-drain' (Goss and Lindquist 1995). Accordingly, the processes, "by which surplus is drained from the periphery to the core areas within or between countries are not self-regulating but cumulative, leading to a greater impoverishment of the less developed" (Wood 1982: 304). So the causes of migration cannot be separated from its consequences as they are all a part of the vicious cycle of underdevelopment (Shrestha 1990).

Despite differences between different types of structuralist approach, the key characteristic is still

⁸ In the context of the Nepalese agrarian economy, Shrestha refers to a vicious cycle, as the absence of able-bodied men is seen as leading to the deterioration of agriculture, and then to low production and shortages of food (Shrestha 1990).

⁹ Actual estimates are very difficult to come by, and they differ wildly. "Lies, Damn Lies and Numbers" is a short comment on the conflicting numbers of Nepali migrant workers in India (Dahal 1997).

the view of human agency as determined by vertical relations of dependency. The model does not attend to horizontal economic, social, and political relationships at the local level, nor does it address the reproduction of relationships between migrants and the sending communities. As Hannerz observes: “What the periphery does for itself, its autonomy, and capacity for change, is largely ignored” (Hannerz 1992: 226). Accordingly the theory does not provide a model that is capable of generating local level research problems on migration from rural communities (Kearney 1986).

Pakistani migration to the Gulf

A relevant case in question is the Pakistani migration to the Persian Gulf which illustrates the importance of international labour migration for the Pakistani economy, provides an example of the neo-classical interpretation of migration, and demonstrates its limitations. In 1987 it was estimated that over two million people - approximately 10% of the country's adult male labour force - was working overseas, the majority of these in the Gulf states (Ballard 1987: 23). However, declining demands in the Gulf countries have caused the total number of migrants to decrease, and during the 1990s, following the Gulf War, about 800,000 of the Pakistani labour force returned home.

When former Pakistani prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the early 1970s described Pakistani migrants to the Gulf states as the “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for wealthy Arab states (in Addleton 1992: 21), it would seem that he was acutely aware of the position of Pakistan as a poor relative of the Gulf states, exporting cheap, unskilled labour for mainly menial tasks. Along a similar line, Marxist political-economic models have labelled the Gulf migration as “over-exploitation”, as it extracts from the worker a surplus value and a labour-rent equal to the quantity of unpaid labour furnished by the migrant worker's relatives in the home area in order to keep up local production (Lefebvre 1999: 15). On the other hand, it has been argued that the very wide income differentials between Pakistan and the Middle East make it difficult to argue that the Pakistani workers were exploited (Addleton 1992: 23). The revenue from their investment, in terms of manpower exchanged for economical resources, was manifold higher in the Gulf states than it would have been in Pakistan. Bhutto would not have been unaware that the export of labour also constituted the largest earner of foreign exchange to his country.

Furthermore, the very nature of Gulf migration makes it difficult to analyse it from a purely structuralist perspective. The (male) labour migrant to the Gulf states is usually employed on the basis of a two year contract, so his return to Pakistan is an implicit aspect of the arrangement.

Though many migrants would be going abroad on successive contracts, and in fact make the two year contract periods an organising principle for their working lives, the permanent move to the Gulf states is a rarity, and even more so is the move of entire families. The point of going away is, very clearly, to bring back a return for consumption or investment purposes. So by making the migrant part of a flow of labour from periphery to core, the structuralist perspective only manages to capture the actual move. But it misses the motive and the movement back again.

2.3.3 New approaches to migration

Writing on Tibetan 'border worlds', van Spengen observes: "The intellectual appeal of grand explanatory frameworks like Wallerstein's is that all societal developments seem to fit an apparent logic, which makes every bit of information fall directly into its place" (van Spengen 2000: 2). Similarly, reducing migrants into labour units and their motivations into economic incentives holds its own justification, as outcomes of migration practices have been measured in remittances. As argued previously, the problem with conventional migration approaches is not that they are wrong, but that they by virtue of their conventions impose specific categories on the analysis, thus not capturing the whole picture.

In recent years, migration research has increasingly moved away from mechanical models towards far more dynamic approaches which combine macro- and micro-level perspectives, thus integrating the analysis of the structure of social relations with that of the political economy in which they evolve (Rogaly and de Haan 2002, Sørensen and Olwig 2002). The questions that migration research increasingly asks are less related to the properties of specific localised places, and more to the nature of the relations that link individual actors who reside in these places, and the origin and destination points take on significance only in relation to how they are perceived by the individual actors (Kearney 1995, Olwig 1997a, 1997b, Smith and Guarnizo 1998, Massey 1998). Conceptualisations of migration have, over the last ten years, increasingly been informed by notions like 'transnational practice' (Kearney 1995, Smith and Guarnizo 1998), 'cultural site' (Hastrup and Olwig 1997), and 'continuum' (Gardner 1995, Ferguson 1992, 1999), all of which operate with implicit or explicit understandings of multi-locality where the migration is seen as an open-ended process.

2.3.4 Transnationalism

It is probably within the emerging conceptualisation of transnationalism that the reproduction of relations between migrant and sending unit has received most attention. The theoretical body

developed around the concepts of transnationalism and transmigration emerged in the early 1990s from the recognition that the constant back and forth flow of people did not fit into existing explanatory frameworks (Glick Schiller et al 1992: 5). Based especially on analyses of Caribbean and North American migrant networks, an increasing recognition had emerged that “many migrants persist in their relationship to their home society, not in contradiction to but in conjunction with their settlement in the host society” (Glick Schiller et al 1992: 6). This persistence is not a new phenomenon, but it has, according to Glick Schiller, become more pronounced in the current situation where economic dislocations in both the Third World and in industrialised nations have resulted in increased migration. Furthermore, migrants are increasingly living at the margins of the host society, often illegally and with increasing difficulties in constructing secure cultural, social and economic bases within the new settings. This sense of vulnerability and exclusion is seen to result in the maintenance of multiple racial, ethnic, and national identities (ibid). As means of transport and electronic communication have developed rapidly, migrants have increasingly found it possible to maintain relations to multiple localities, and as a result, family and kinship ties have moved from a largely local to a global scale (Al-Ali and Koser 2002: 3).

Transnationalism shares with world systems analysis the view that the world consists of one global capitalist system, and it is this perspective that allows for the examination of the economic forces that structure the flows of international migration. Global and transnational processes should, however, not be confused. Whereas the focus on transnationalism can be seen as having arisen out of an increasingly globalised world, global processes are often decentred from specific national territories, whereas transnational processes are anchored in, but also transcend one or more nation-states (Kearney 1995). It is in this context that the transnational practice should be seen: “Transnational practices, while connecting collectivities located in more than one national territory, are embodied in specific social relations established between specific people, situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times” (Smith and Guarnizo 1998: 11). Accordingly, analytical focus is on the nature and dynamics of specific social relations stretching across space and time. The world is seen as organised by the actor, and what has emerged are transnational spaces, defined by the individual and reflected in for example the view that New York is “...just another Dominican capital” (Sørensen 1997: 129). The Pakistani migrant, who had lived for three decades in Denmark, could – as was the case in November 2005 – stand for election for the local municipality in Copenhagen and at the same time run for mayor in his native town in Pakistan, thus manoeuvring politically in two sites, which both, in different ways, are part of *his* community.

The physical move, which the migrant undertakes, may be less significant than the social and economic mobility that he hopes to achieve when he returns home (Olwig 1997a: 115)¹⁰. One way migrants keep options open is to continuously translate the economic and social position gained in one political setting into political, social and economic capital in another (Gardner 1995). The concept of transnational migration therefore encompasses the idea that the migratory move not necessarily is a finite one. But it also does not necessitate a final return to the point of origin, or at least the dream of that return, as its end goal.

More recent migration from Pakistan constitutes another example of transnationalism, practiced by mainly highly educated Pakistanis who can fit into employment niches in North America, Western Europe, or Australia, and who often are disenchanted with livelihood opportunities in Pakistan: “The migrating Pakistanis are mostly embarking on a journey of no return. Their break with their country of origin is final, their disillusionment with it total” (Newsline November 2000: 5). Eventually, the migrant disappears, and what emerges is the *Desi*. Pronounced ‘*day-see*’, it is the Hindi word for ‘from my country’. On the personal level, “... to be a *Desi* connotes some sort of ancestral affiliation with the subcontinent and some sort of desire in crafting a sense of identity or feeling of community with others who share that ancestral affiliation” (Karim 1999: 25). The central notion is not about moving or returning, but rather about being somewhere while consciously being aware of a degree of rootedness somewhere else.

It has been a concern that the transnational perspective per se narrows down the field of investigation to movements and networks involving the bodily crossing of state boundaries, as this has been seen as the only clearly defined feature of transnationalism (Sørensen and Olwig 2002: 2). This more than anything reflects that the concept of transnational migration arose in a context of Caribbean and North American migrant networks, most of them developed through migration to the US (Kearney 1995, Nyberg Sørensen 1997, Smith and Guarnizo 1998), and a number of studies have demonstrated how the direction of migrations over time would shift in accordance with shifting policies of receiving countries (Olwig 1997a, 1997b). It also reflects a current situation where there is increasing national and international concern in Europe about migrants and refugees who cross territorial borders, often illegally, and the distinction between the categories of migrants and refugees is being debated (van Hear 1998). But concentrating on migrants who cross international boundaries constitutes a territorial trap of its own. It is not evident why the residence of social actors in different territorial states should explain why their

¹⁰ Eventually what was originally interpreted as a ‘push’ in the larger picture, attains a symbolic value as a ‘rite de passage’ at the micro level, as in Breuser’s study from Burkina Faso: “...if you have not been to the Ivory Coast before your marriage, your wife may some time say that you don’t know foreign countries” (Breusers 1999: 197).

practices of social interaction set them apart from migrants who do not cross national borders. For example, the move from Eastern Anatolia to Istanbul is likely to involve the crossing of more significant cultural and economic borders than the actual, transnational move from Istanbul to cities of Western Europe. Furthermore, as communication technologies have improved rapidly, direct and instantaneous communication is now an option to an increasing proportion of both migrants and sending units, regardless of distances and international borders.

In other words, the transnational approach does have a significant contribution to make to understanding not only international, but internal migration as well. It delineates a process whereby members of a multi-placed unit reproduce their social relations. What therefore needs to be understood and analysed is what Doreen Massey terms a changing geography of social relations - a 'time-space compression' where social relations increasingly are stretched out over space (Massey 1991). Without doing away with the importance of localised places, analytical focus has shifted to the structures of interaction characterising individual actors who reside in different places.

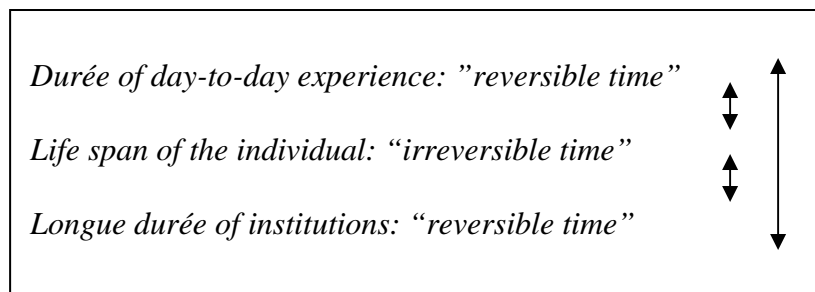
2.4 Giddens' conceptualisation of social interaction and time-space distanciation

In order to further an understanding of the nature of the 'structures of interaction' mentioned above, and identify appropriate conceptual tools for the analysis of the reproduction of these structures, I will in the following section present and discuss work by Anthony Giddens. I will do this with particular reference to how analyses of the different types of interaction within a social system and the nature of, and control over, resources within the system can contribute to an understanding of time-space distanciation, defined by Giddens as the "... the ability of social systems to stretch across space and time" (Giddens 1984: 185). Though not discussed at any length by Giddens, time-space distanciation is per se a characteristic of any migrant move, and it is an aspect of the migration practice, which must be addressed in order to develop an understanding of migration as a social process.

Central to the work of Giddens is what he terms the "duality of structure", whereby the structural properties of social systems are seen as both medium and outcome of the practices they organise (Giddens 1984: 25). *Structure* consists of recursively organised sets of rules and resources, which both enable and constrain the actions of human agents, whereas *the social system*, in which structure is implicated, comprises the situated activities of human agents, reproduced across time and space. Accordingly, the analysis of the structuration of social systems refers to "...studying

the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction” (ibid).

As illustrated, Giddens conceives of social action and interaction as embedded in time at three levels. The first level is the ‘duree’ of everyday life, or ‘reversible time’ in the sense that actions are repetitive and routine (Giddens 1984: 35). The second level is the life span of the individual, which Giddens terms ‘irreversible time’, a life trajectory progressing from birth to death.



Giddens 1984: 35

The third level is the *longue durée*, which both pre-exists and outlasts the lives of individuals born into it (Giddens 1984: 170). It is a social form possessing the characteristics of the *Gemeinschaft* – concord rather than convention, custom rather than legislation (Toennies 1971 [1926]: 137). So the individual actor is constrained and his/her activities “...are thus embedded within, and are constitutive elements of, structured properties of institutions stretching well beyond [him/her]self in time and space” (Giddens 1984: 24). The co-presence of the three levels of interaction in the same locale – the same, specific physical setting of interaction, often a village community – constitutes a stabilising feedback mechanism, which can be likened to ‘the little community’, referred to previously.

The problem of time-space distancing emerges when these three levels of social action are not co-present in the same locality, but are characterised by diverse action contexts. In their discussion of Giddens, Goss and Lindquist refer to how social systems cohere and reproduce at two different levels: through social integration and the intensive day-to-day interaction of individuals who are “co-present” in time and space; and through system integration, or extensive interaction between individuals and institutions across time and space, where co-presence is unnecessary (Goss and Lindquist 1995: 333). But ‘system integration’ also implies that individuals, who belong to a multi-placed social system, often are situated in diverse action

contexts. Accordingly, the *duree* of each individual may diverge from the structured properties of the *longue duree*, which the individuals derived from. This potential tension between the *duree* of the individual actor and the *longue duree* of the larger group is central to both what Giddens terms the ‘problem of order’ in his theory of structuration and to the very nature of the migrant practice, as I will discuss in the end of this section.

2.4.1 Resources

The nature of, and control over, resources accessed in different action contexts are central to an understanding of the reproduction of the social unit. Largely building on work by Max Weber, Giddens operates with two types of resources, allocative and authoritative, as summarised below.

Allocative resources	Authoritative resources
Material features of the environment (raw materials, material power sources)	Organisation of social time-space (temporal-spatial constitution of paths and regions)
Means of material production/ reproduction (instruments of production, technology)	Production/reproduction of the body (organization and relation of human beings in mutual association)
Produced goods (artefacts created by the interaction of 1 and 2)	Organisation of life chances (constitution of chances of self-development and self-expression)

Giddens 1984: 258

In the discussion by Goss and Lindquist, authoritative resources condition differential access to the social world and political power over other people; allocative resources condition differential access to the material world and entail powers of wealth and property. Though evolutionary theories, in Giddens’ view, have tended to give priority to various sorts of easily quantifiable, allocative resources, Giddens argues that authoritative resources are “...every bit as infrastructural as allocative resources are” (Giddens 1984: 258). So whereas the two types of resources can be isolated analytically, it is important for an understanding of their significance to see them as interlinked, as “... [a]ny coordination of social systems across time and space necessarily involves a definite combination of these two types of resources” (ibid).

It is worth stressing this combination, as it is often via the control over allocative resources – e.g. land or livestock in a village context – that authority and social standing are defined. In a study

from Bangladesh, Gardner demonstrates how migrants invest resources deriving from *bidesh*, the London-based end of a continuum linking England and Bangladesh, in landed property back home in *desh*, thereby maintaining traditional value systems: “The blood links of the household and *gushti* (descent group), the soil of the *desh*, and the journeys of the migrants are thus interlinked in a series of relationships which feed into, and reinforce, each other” (Gardner 1995: 66). So as “...the proceeds of migration is ploughed back into the soil” (ibid), the life chances of the migrant have, at least partly, been converted into allocative resources that are compatible with the values characterising the *longue duree*.

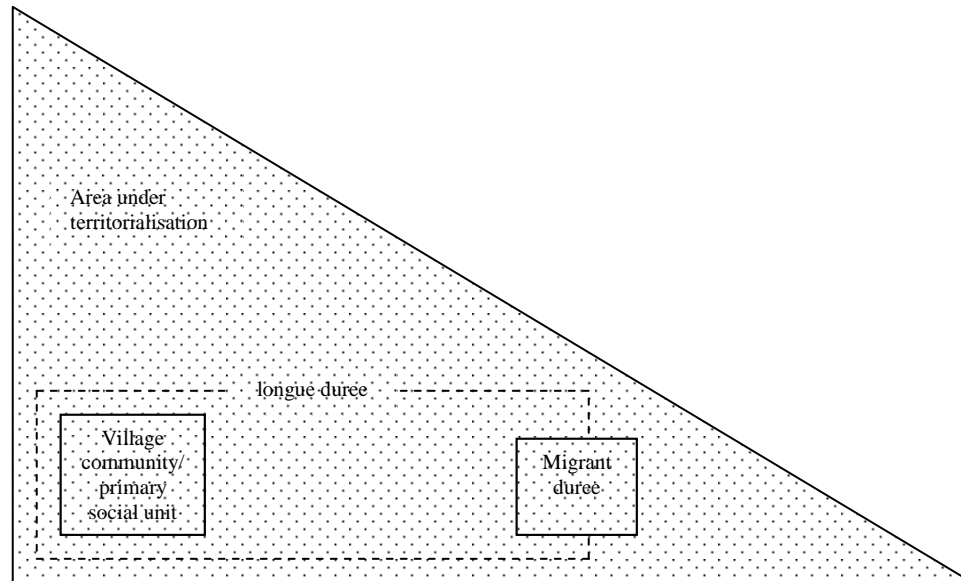
The different types of allocative and authoritative resources are also related and mutually dependent. Giddens stresses this in relation to allocative resources, but the point is also of relevance with respect to authoritative resources. Of particular significance here are ‘life chances’ – also a term introduced by Weber – that refers to both the chances of survival for human beings and the whole range of aptitudes and capabilities characterising and diversifying different forms of society. The potential for both the individual to organise life chances and the pursuit of life chances that are different to those available to other members of the social system are characteristics of the migrant practice. This can then result in changes to other types of authoritative resources. The migrant might attain a position that commands sufficient allocative resources to enable immediate members of his/her social system – spouse and children – to move to the locality where he/she is working, thereby changing the organisation of social time-space of members of the social system and, ultimately, changing the nature of the system itself.

2.5 Territorialisation and migration

Figure 2.2 summarises how the two components of the conceptual framework, which have been presented in this chapter, are linked. The fully drawn lines signify spatially fixed locations, thereby clearly distinguishable from the set of institutionalised practices and jointly held understandings characteristic of the *longue duree*, represented in the diagram by the dashed line.

The triangle represents the geographical area that is being territorialised. It is ‘abstract space’ in as much as it is a theoretical representation of the territory, which the Pakistani state claims and attempts to make uniform through various means of territorialisation. The triangle shape is used previously in the chapter in order to illustrate the transformation process, which mountain livelihoods are undergoing. Accordingly, the village community is located where the vertical dimension is considered important, whereas the migrant *duree* is situated along the horizontal axis, as a part of the transformation process.

Figure 2.2 Territorialisation and migration – conceptual framework



Again it must be emphasized how the ‘little story’ of mountain livelihoods and migration is integrated in the ‘big story’ of territorialisation. As figure 2.2 aims to illustrate, the territorialisation process constitutes the background, the political and economic context, which serves to condition the livelihood strategies and migration practices, in which the mountain population engages. But it is through the ‘little story’, focusing on livelihood strategies and migration practices of individual actors, that the territorialisation process becomes more than pure description.

2.5.1 Migration as a problem of order

It is the capacity of institutions and individuals for regular interaction across time and space, which Giddens refers to as “time-space distancing”, and it is the question of the time-space distancing of social systems – the ability of institutions to bite into time and space – that constitutes what Giddens terms the “problem of order” in his theory of structuration (ibid: 181). It is, more specifically, “... a problem of reconciling the sectional interests of individual actors with social morality, the *conscience collective* or ‘common value system’” (Giddens 1993: 105), , and that is why the migrant *duree* in figure 2.2 is positioned at the edge of the *longue duree*.

This problem of order is central to the understanding of the dynamics of the migration process in relation to social systems. The *longue duree* is the context and/or site where the migrant has a position ascribed to him/her. The migrant is born into a family, he/she is a member of a lineage and may belong to a caste and/or a class. The migrant practice is, by definition, a move whereby the *duree* of everyday life and the life span of the individual are spatially distanced from the constraining and enabling properties of the *longue duree*. Accordingly, the central question in relation to the migration practice is how the multi-placement of the members of a social unit impacts the institutions constituting that unit. As mentioned above, this question should be pursued through an analysis of the activities of the members constituting the multi-placed social unit, and the control of resources within that unit.

So in order to properly address the ‘problem of order’ in relation to the migration process, I suggest that different questions need to be addressed in order to set out directions for the empirical research and thus elaborate on the research questions raised in the introductory chapter. First is the question relating to the individual process whereby the migrant pursues ‘life chances’ and allocative resources, as this conveys an understanding of the nature of migrant’s *duree*. So rather than accepting the logic of a world system, with its flow of labourers between periphery and core, or the functionalist approach where the migrant only is seen to respond to an apparent economic logic, the analysis must focus on decisions and choices made in relation to circumstances of the specific social and economic context.

The second question focuses on how the combination of allocative and authoritative resources, which come about as a result of the migration process, over time might affect the reproduction of the multi-placed social unit. By focusing this analysis on social units, which include members in both Thalay and Karachi, it becomes possible to expand the analysis of migration from a practice explained by the priorities of the mountain community, to a more open-ended process, which allows for an interpretation of the migrant trajectory in terms of both the actual circumstances faced by the individual migrant, his/her *duree*, and the evolving relations between multi-placed members of a social unit.

Chapter Three

Analytical and methodological framework

3.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the analytical and methodological framework needed in relation to the study of livelihood strategies and migration practices, which the population in Thalay is involved in. Accordingly the objectives of the chapter can be specified as follows;

To present the analytical units, which I consider relevant for the study: This involves a presentation of the actor-oriented approach, as expressed by the emphasis on livelihoods, as well as a discussion of the necessity of making an analytical distinction between the household unit and the individual migrant.

To discuss the bi-local approach and argue for the selection of the field sites; The need to make an analytical distinction between household and migrant is reflected in the selection of fieldwork sites – Thalay Valley and Karachi, 2000 kilometres apart.

To explain the main methodologies used during the fieldwork and analysis; Different kinds of quantitative and qualitative methods were used in both Thalay and Karachi, and after a presentation of these, the advantages of operating with different methods are discussed, including the potential for methodological triangulation. The final discussion concerns the reliability of the

data, including the implications of a livelihood focus that cannot directly involve the female half of the population.

3.1 Analytical approach

In their review of migration research, Halfacree and Boyle (1993) advocate a shift of analytical focus, with attention being shifted from the differential characteristics of potential migrant locations to considering the potential migrants' engagement with these differential opportunities (Halfacree and Boyle 1993: 334). To them, a central issue in this conceptualization is the situatedness of migration as a normative event within everyday life. What they advocate could be termed a contextualization of the migratory move: "This is unlikely to be achieved comprehensively through direct interrogation of the migration decision alone..... we need to enquire around the subject, building up a picture of the migration decision from a variety of angles" (Halfacree and Boyle 1993: 338). The implication of this is an approach that should address not just issues directly related to migration, but also enquire around the subject. Rather than focusing on the specific situation prior to the migration – a pull or a push – or the actual spatial direction and timing of the move, the migration should be seen in relation to 'the flow of everyday life', with relation to an individual's past and projected future, in fact the entire biography. Halfacree and Boyle emphasize the importance of an understanding of the practical consciousness and habitus of the migrant in order to "...promote migration to the status of a normative event in many people's lives" (Halfacree and Boyle 1993: 338).

By using the livelihood as the main unit of analysis, I will not claim to reach a full understanding of the empirical complexity embedded in 'practical consciousness' and 'habitus'. What I want to accomplish is an understanding of livelihood strategies and migration practices as processes understood and interpreted in terms of the actions and motivations of the people involved in them.

3.1.1 The livelihood

In general, 'livelihood' tends to be considered in economic terms as a "means of living, maintenance, sustenance; especially to earn, gain, get, make, seek a livelihood" (The Oxford English Dictionary of 1971, in Sørensen and Olwig 2002: 3), an understanding that is also reflected in its most widely applied usage where "[a] livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living" (Chambers and Conway 1992: 7). Accordingly, focus is on the activities the individual actor engages in, rather than the physical constraints he/she is seen as operating under. Problematic about the definition advanced by Chambers and

Conway is, however, that it reduces the livelihood analysis to an explanation of how to ‘make a living’, with focus on immediate needs and food security and with less consideration of the long-term perspective. The definition suggested by Frank Ellis is more inclusive: “A livelihood encompasses income, both cash and in kind, as well as the social institutions (kin, family, compound, village and so on), gender relations and property rights required to support and to sustain a given standard of living” (Ellis 1998: 4).

The livelihood is seen as shaped through a strategic, usually household-based utilisation of its assets that takes into account not only short- and long-term needs of the household, but also an institutional environment comprising policies, institutions and processes. As emphasized by Pain and Lautze in their study of Afghan livelihoods: “An essential dimension is the emphasis on the inter-linkages between the micro (the household), the meso (the village) and the macro (the formal and informal institutional dimensions), and the effect that these have on livelihood strategies (Pain and Lautze 2002: 10). It is an implication of this that the livelihood analysis also includes and builds on an understanding of the specific nature of territorialisation processes and the strategies and practices whereby a population engages with that process.

In summary, a study of livelihoods requires an awareness of the wider spatial context of the units of analysis as well as an ability to empirically establish how the episode of a livelihood practice relates to the longer history of a strategy that bites into time and space. Key here is strategy, as the concept of livelihood strategy puts emphasis on not just *how people make a living*, but *why they choose to make a living in this particular way*. Accordingly the analysis must take into account both the rationale motivating the specific action and the long-term implications of the action.

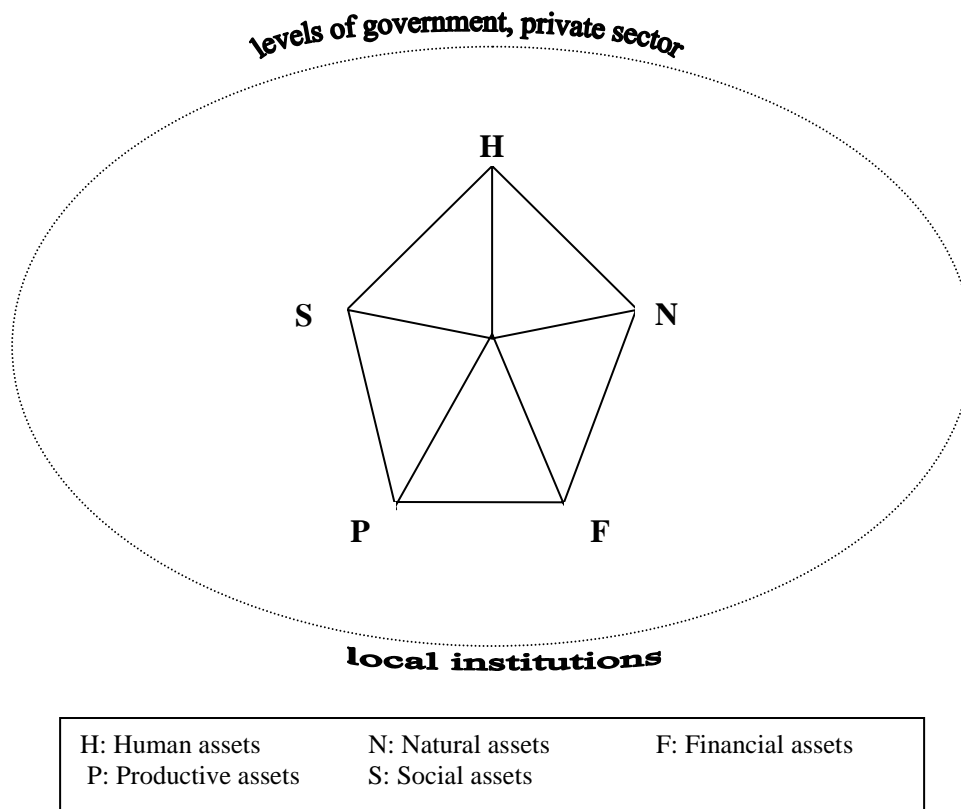
The livelihood framework

The livelihood framework constitutes an attempt to apply the livelihood concept as an analytical tool that can be used to systematise the analysis of livelihoods by focusing on the portfolio of assets, which the unit of analysis, typically the household, commands. The application of the livelihood framework thereby also constitutes an attempt to operationalise the concept of *allocative* and *authoritative resources*, as presented in the previous chapter, and thus allow the analysis to become more explicit as to the actual nature of these resources.

While there is no such thing as *the* livelihood approach, most models operate with the five asset

types presented in figure 3.1 below¹¹. *Natural assets* refer to the stock of natural resources available to the household, e.g. farmland, forest areas, irrigation water and pastures – and by extension the flow of goods that accrues through the utilisation of these assets. *Financial assets* are “the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives” (Pain and Lautze 2002: 11-15). These include available stocks – like cash, bank deposits, jewellery, or livestock – and regular inflows of money, e.g. salaries, pensions, or remittances. *Productive assets* are generally considered to be “the stock of structures and equipment used for production” (ibid). These can include machinery, irrigation channels, and draught animals. *Human assets* refer to individual capabilities and qualities within the household, including health, education and skills. *Social assets* refer to the “institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions” (ibid). In short, social assets can be likened to what Giddens terms the *longue duree*.

Fig. 3.1 Livelihood framework



Source: Pain and Lautze 2002.

It must be stressed that the different types of assets are highly interrelated. For example, financial

¹¹ Both the definitions of the different asset types and figure 3.1 are based on the ‘sustainable livelihoods model’ developed by the Department for International Development (DFID).

assets can be drawn on in order to invest in human assets, and human assets – like secular or Islamic education – can contribute to social standing. Productive assets, essential for agricultural production, can be converted into financial assets in order to meet short-term subsistence needs, e.g. in case of food shortage, thereby however jeopardising the long-term potential for agricultural production.

It is important to emphasize that the purpose of using the livelihoods framework is not to measure the value of the different assets, partly because it is difficult, if not impossible to find measures that can be used to calibrate all five types of assets, with human and social assets posing particular difficulties. But the most prominent reason is that it is not the intent of the analysis to arrive at a sum total, but rather to use the understanding of the asset composition at household level to arrive at generalised explanations of how livelihood strategies have evolved over time.

3.1.2 Units of analysis – the household and the migrant

In his discussion of the livelihood concept, Norman Long warns against fixing the analysis of livelihoods on conventional anchorage points for an analysis of economic life, as he sees this as a way of prejudging the issue and limiting the range of the enquiry (Long 2001: 54). The household is one such point. At the same time, however, the household is the basic unit of social organisation in village life, framing and giving meaning to individual social actions.

Mostly, the household has been defined as a consumption or residential unit; those eating from the same pot, and sleeping under the same roof. It is a number of people, usually related kin, who are seen to constitute a labour force and/or a consumption unit. It can be seen as a unit whose “... whole organization is determined by the size and composition of the peasant family and by the coordination of its consumptive demands with the number of its working hands” (Chayanov 1931, in Wolf 1966: 14). It is often seen as organized around a specific task, namely the procurement of a livelihood from a natural resource base. Here it is an implicit understanding that individual access to that resource base, and thus livelihood security, is conditioned by membership of a household, as ownership of the resources rests with the head of household. Accordingly the household can be defined as a co-resident group that ensures its maintenance and reproduction by generating and disposing of a collective income fund. As such, the household is differentiated from, but not exclusive of the family, co-resident dwelling groups, and kinship structures (Wood 1982)¹².

¹² In his review of domestic groups, Yanagisako contends that the grounds for analytically separating families and households lie in the recognition that they are both “logically distinct” and “empirically different”. The logical

Problematic about that definition is what has been termed “the conception of the household as an individual by another name” (Folbre 1986: 5). This describes the substitution of the rational, calculating individual with a rational, calculating household, and thus the implicit risk of conflating the interests of household members with those of the male household head and misrepresenting or ignoring intra-household behaviour and intra-household stratification (Goss and Lindquist 1995: 327). It is clear that the concept of household strategy does not deal adequately with individuality within the household, and Goss and Lindquist suggest that it may be better to conceive of the household as a social collectivity whose configuration and internal division of labour results from tactical decisions of individuals and negotiations between cooperating and competing interests. For the purpose of this study I will use the household definition developed by Lefebvre in his study of international migration in two Punjabi villages: “The household is a unit of production, a unit of consumption, and the location of socialization and ritual life. By unit of production, I do not mean a self-sufficient and autarkic cell but rather an economic matrix depending on multiple sources of income. It is composed of all the people who are socially and economically related to one another and who share residence, although some of the male members live in another town in Pakistan or work abroad” (Lefebvre 1999: 6).

Here it is essential to underline that livelihoods must be understood as both individually and jointly constructed, and represent patterns of interdependency between the needs, interests and values of particular sets of individuals (Long 1997: 12). So in order to establish an understanding of migration as more than a site-specific household strategy, it is essential that the analysis is able to analytically isolate the migrant from his household, or from the *longue duree* of customs and institutions. The individual migrant practice challenges existing categories of social organization: or rather, category becomes process, as the household unit increasingly is characterized by long-term absence of some of its members. In order to fully understand this process and the evolving relations between absent and present household members, I suggest that the household unit and the migrant should be understood as analytically separate units, that their capacity for cooperation should be seen as a process, evolving over time, and that this process is considered a central part of the analysis.

3.1.3 The bi-local approach

As the actors are moving between different cultural landscapes, the uni-local analytical approach is problematic, as Berry observes: “Too often surveys of migrants which are conducted at one site

distinction is apparent because the referent of the family is kinship, while the referent of the household is geographical propinquity or common residence” (Yanagisako 1979: 162).

fail to place the informants in either a historical or a wider social context” (Berry 1985: 42-43). Studies undertaken in the traditional village context tend to consider migration practices as ‘noise’, disturbing the bounded area that is the subject of investigation, or the migrants are absent during the research period. Remittances are acknowledged as important, often crucial sources of sustenance, and returnees are seen or idealised as agents of change. But the migrant is interpreted in the terms of the actions that are significant for his/her native place, and the actual livelihood of the migrant remains poorly understood, as the migrant is positioned outside the designated study area.

Very much the same, uni-local approach can be found in studies of urban migrant communities. In an Indian context, Sharma deplores what she calls an unfortunate division of labour between social anthropologists, who have concentrated on micro-studies of rural situations, and the sociologists that have focused on urban situations (Sharma 1977: 283). The existence of roots somewhere else is an acknowledged given, a factor explaining certain cultural traits that sets the specific community apart from the rest. Recent studies focus more on how the ethnic group articulates on the urban scene, more so than ever in the context of the rapidly growing third-world city where different numbers of ethnic groups are thrown in together, demarcating territories, finding occupational niches, and struggling for resources. It is characteristic that most recent studies of urban development in Karachi emphasize the emergence of urban interest groups organized around the struggle for basic amenities in an urban arena deeply fragmented due to ethnic and religious strife (Hasan 1999, Sheikh 1998, Khan 1996). But the actual dynamics by which that less visible community, the rural-urban continuum, communicate and interrelate, more often than not remain unexplored.

The adoption of a bi-local approach is a logical consequence of the intent to analyse the migrant in his/her own right, thus “isolating” the migrant livelihood from the household unit and enabling an understanding of how the migrant makes his/her place. In his review of ethnography in relation to the world system, Marcus argues that a multi-sited approach, as opposed to the “intensively-focused-upon single site” (Marcus 1995: 96), would cross-cut established dichotomies such as local and global, life world and world system, and “..examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space” (Marcus 1995: 96). Designed around chains, paths, or juxtapositions of locations, the focus of the analysis becomes the association or connection between the sites, or rather, people staying in the sites (ibid: 105), so the actual scope of the approach ideally becomes a resultant of the moves of the people.

Here the advantage of the multi-local approach is that it allows the event to be observed in

several contexts, as it posits the research in different parts of the migration process. Both the sending village communities in Thalay and the community members resident in Karachi are incorporated in the approach, as are migrants in various stages of the process. So by uncovering the connotations that can be attached to various aspects of the migration practice, it is possible to construct a reliable picture of not just the migration process, but also the way it is integrated in local livelihoods.

The problem of context

The strength of the multi-local approach is that it inserts queries into different points of the migrant situation. The drawback is the problem of context, or rather, the challenge of dealing with more than one context.

Any analysis is a reduction, as fragments are cut out of a reality. No matter how detailed the study, its objective demands that specific phenomena are in the foreground and highlighted. The context connects the components of interaction to broader properties of the institutionalization of social life (Giddens 1984: 119). A context is, in other words, the set of circumstances surrounding a situation. A setting is an edited context. The setting comprises the set of circumstances in which the actors are placed. As such it constitutes an analytical construct, as it is the analyst who, based on his or her knowledge of the situation, 'invents' the setting (Mitchell 1987: 17). It needs to be reiterated that there is no such thing as a 'complete' setting. The analyst excludes what (s)he considers contextually irrelevant features, thereby suppressing some of the complexity in the events analyzed (Mitchell 1983: 205).

But it is part of the same process, defining subject matter and contextual relevance, to exclude contextual elements that the analysis cannot access. The obvious example of relevance to this study is the unavailability of female informants, a religiously motivated constraint designed to contain contacts between Balti women and basically any "stranger". Accordingly there are two sets of contextual parameters that come to influence the methodology and thereby the analysis; the ones that the analyst subjectively eliminates, and the ones that cannot be accessed. So it was necessary to define and adjust the objectives of the research according to these two sets of parameters. An obvious example is the issue of intra household dynamics, as an analysis of livelihood strategies and the impact of migrant practices ideally would include gendered aspects of the decision-making process.

The challenge of defining subject matter and contextual relevance becomes bigger when the

analysis, as here, operates with two localities that contain entirely different characteristics. This implies that the Balti living in Karachi by and large is reduced to a migrant. The analysis includes him because he is a Balti, and as a point of departure it contextualizes him mainly by promoting village-based findings to constraints. This is a problematic reduction that inadvertently attempts to confine him to certain sets of relationships that relate to this assumed migrant identity, and accordingly it is a focus on exclusion rather than inclusion in relation to the urban context. It was only during my fieldwork that I started uncovering the dynamics that gave their presence in the city a more permanent character.

3.2 Fieldwork design

The design of the fieldwork was conditioned by the availability of secondary sources, the selection of fieldwork sites, and the sequence of the fieldwork periods, all of which were important for the selection of methods.

The lack of secondary sources regarding Balti migration and Balti livelihoods was an important factor in the fieldwork design. This is not to suggest that Baltistan is a blank on the map in terms of research. It is certainly not, and numerous studies provide very thorough insights into the processes by which local populations adapt to, and manage within, the local resource base (Whiteman 1985, MacDonald 1994, Schmidt 2000, Nyborg 2002). But apart from a couple of summary reports, carried out under the auspices of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, AKRSP (Gloeckler 1995, Kuriakose 1996), the issue of Balti migration has not been treated separately. Migration has been acknowledged as an important means to access supplementary income, but no attempt has been made to focus on the nature of the migrant practice. Apart from Dittmann's study of ethno-linguistic groups in the bazaars of Northern Pakistan (Dittmann 1997) and casual references in colonial documents, there is little documentation of Balti presence outside Baltistan¹³.

The methodological implications of this were: The methodology in both Baltistan and Karachi had to be designed in such a way that it would provide both a broader baseline and a more detailed picture developed at the levels of the household and the individual migrant. In Thalay, this implied a broader understanding of livelihood strategies and migrant practices in the clearly demarcated space that constituted the field work area. Whereas the objective was similar in

¹³ To this lack of background material should be added the difficulties in accessing data from the population census of 1981 and 1998. Due to the status of the Northern Areas, the Pakistani government is reluctant to make data from the census reports for the five districts, which constitute the Northern Areas, available.

Karachi, the challenge was a different one, as the first step was the very demarcation of the fieldwork area. Here the contextual picture emerged from the development of an understanding of what constitutes a Balti migrant community in the mass of social, economic, and cultural relationships that constitute the urban fabric of the metropolis of Karachi. This was then the framework, within which the actions of the individual migrant were understood, in relation to both the urban context and the family unit back in Thalay.

3.2.1 Selection of fieldwork sites

Thalay

The decision to choose Thalay for my first fieldwork in 1995 was based on the following criteria (Jensen 1997: 19):

- i) An altitudinal variation that would make it likely to encounter a range of different production zones within the valley.
- ii) The transportation facilities should have been improved vastly during the last ten years, as has been the case throughout most of Baltistan. I thus hoped to identify changes in adaptive strategies that resulted from the improved means of access.
- iii) The nearest urban township should be located at such a distance that daily commuting was not possible. As the location of most settlements in Baltistan is determined by proximity to cultivable land rather than proximity to towns, this criterion can be met in most parts of the district.
- iv) The valley should be off the ‘beaten’ tourist track. Only a few valleys of Baltistan are actually ‘haunted’ by tourists. It thus seemed closer to ‘reality’ to select a valley, where the effects of tourism at the most are indirect.

Apart from these criteria, the choice was narrowed further down, as foreigners could and can not access two of the main valleys of southern Baltistan – Kharmang and Saltoro – as these are located close to the Indian-Pakistani ceasefire line.

Thematically, my decision to return to Thalay was based on conclusions from my initial research. Inspired by the model of accessibility in mountain regions, developed by Nigel Allan (1986), I had been operating with the hypothesis that improved access to rapidly growing urban markets would result in changing patterns of agricultural production, with a focus on cash crops. That had proved absolutely wrong, agricultural practices seemed very much ‘conserved’, as imported food

supplies were readily available to cover the deficit between supplies and demand, and the economic resources needed to acquire these external supplies derived from activities outside the valley and outside the agrarian sphere (Jensen 1997). The implications of my work back in 1995 were twofold: Questions concerning non-agrarian and/or non-local livelihood activities had not been answered, and I was no longer seen as a total stranger in the local context.

The return to Thalay was also pragmatic. Rather than establish myself in two completely new settings - one in Baltistan, and one in Karachi - during the relatively short span of my fieldwork, I decided to use and extend the foothold that I had already secured in the valley. Furthermore, my insights in the aspects of local livelihood strategies, which are based on agro-pastoral practices, allowed me to focus more on the externally focused dimensions of local livelihoods.

Karachi

The decision to go to Karachi was partly born out of my preliminary findings from Thalay during my short stay in 1998, partly motivated by conversations with key informants in Skardu, all of whom pointed to Karachi as the main destination of Balti migrants.

It is not immediately logical that Karachi, 2,000 kilometres away in the very south of Sindh, is the most popular destination for Balti migrants – rather than the Punjabi cities of Lahore and Islamabad-Rawalpindi, which are only half that distance away. But it quickly transpired that the combination of better employment opportunities, lower costs of living, and access to educational facilities easily made up for the higher transportation costs involved in going to Karachi.

3.2.2 Seasonality

The fieldwork was structured in such a way that it attempted to take into account aspects of seasonality in both Thalay and Karachi. In order to provide an overview, the main aspects of the fieldwork are summarised in table 3.1 (below).

My first fieldwork in Thalay – back in 1995 – had taken place during the harvest period. This was important, as it allowed me to observe a high number of agro-pastoral practices within a limited period, and this corresponded well with my focus on adaptive strategies within the valley. But it was also evident that it was the busiest time of year, so villagers had very little time for the interviews, and tracking down an adult male member of each household of the relatively small village of Khasurmik during the five weeks of my stay proved very difficult. In the organisation

of the present fieldwork I therefore planned the fieldwork in Thalay for the period after the final harvests. As this is also the time for weddings, it would usually be the time of the year when the highest proportion of the population in Thalay actually is present in the valley. Other external factors also influenced the timing slightly; in 1999, the military coup in October resulted in a two week delay to the start of my fieldwork, and in 2000 the death of a close relative to my research assistants meant some interruptions to the work.

Table 3.1: Organisation of field work

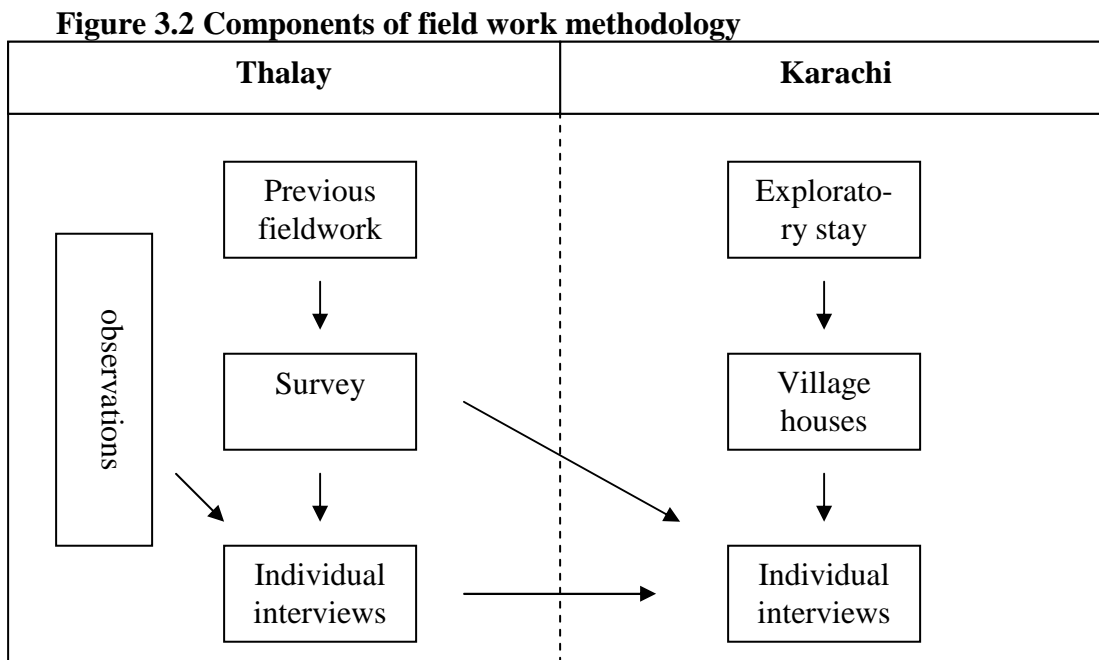
Year	Period	Location	Purpose
1998	August-September	Baltistan/ Thalay Gilgit Kathmandu	Meetings with AKRSP in Skardu and Gilgit Literature search in Gilgit Discussions with research assistants in Thalay Survey initiated (design, test and production of questionnaire, training of research assistants) 2 weeks stay with ICIMOD in Kathmandu, discussing with scientific staff and searching literature
1999	October-December	Baltistan/ Thalay	Perusal of completed part of survey Selection of respondents for interviews Interviews with respondents concerning key issues (migration, government service, army service) Interviews with <i>Thalaypa</i> who now live in Skardu
	December-January	Karachi	Familiarisation, meetings with key informants Literature search
2000	October-December	Baltistan/ Thalay	Perusal of survey in final form, preliminary analysis Final interviews with respondents Workshop at AKRSP in Skardu, presentation and discussion of key findings
2001	January-March	Karachi	Visits to Balti <i>mohallahs</i> in Karachi Interviews with migrants from Thalay Visits to <i>charpars</i> (village houses) in Karachi

In Karachi the seasonality issue was of a different nature. Here it was a priority to organise the fieldwork in such a way that I would spend the relatively cool winter months in the city. This is also the time of the year, when the number of Baltis in Karachi is highest, as many travel south in order to escape the winter in Baltistan. Furthermore, the intent was to incorporate the bi-local approach already at this initial stage and structure the selection of respondents in Karachi in such a way that those interviewed would constitute the Karachi leg of migrant-household linkages,

which I had already investigated in Thalay. Accordingly the two analytical units – household and migrant livelihood – would ideally supplement each other and provide a more complete picture of the interactions between migrant and household.

3.3 Fieldwork methodologies

In figure 3.1 (below) I present the components of the fieldwork methodology employed in Thalay and Karachi. I will then discuss these components in more detail on the following pages.



3.3.1 Fieldwork in Thalay

The fieldwork in Thalay aimed to combine what Sayer (1992) describes as intensive and extensive fieldwork methodologies, thereby combining descriptive generalisations with causal explanations. The point of departure in Thalay, the survey, can be likened to what Sayer describes as extensive research, which “...is concerned with discovering some of the common properties and general patterns of a population as a whole” (Sayer 1992: 242). A ‘broad-brush’ method, the extensive approach abstracts from the actual forms in which individuals or processes interact and combine (ibid: 247), allowing for an overall picture to be established, but lacking in explanatory value. In intensive research the primary questions concern how some causal process works out in a particular or limited number of cases (ibid: 242).

In 1995, when I spent five weeks in Thalay, the initial contacts had been established with the help of AKRSP. Active in Baltistan since 1986 and the largest NGO in the Northern Areas, ‘Aga Khan’ – as it is known among the locals – was involved in projects in most villages of the valley, working together with community-based male Village Organisations and Women’s Organisations. I was thus approved by a locally accepted external agency. Furthermore, my fieldwork was by and large restricted to one village, Khasurmik, where I was living in the house of one of the village leaders, whose son was the school teacher in the village primary school as well as manager of the local Village Organisation.

I adopted a similar strategy for my fieldworks in October-December 1999, and October-December 2000, as I was staying in the house of Apu Mehedi, the father of Youssaf, my intermediary. Located in Yearkhor in the central part of Thalay, the entire valley was more accessible, and the walking distance to both the northern- and southern-most villages did not exceed one and a half hour. Again, staying in a household of a leading family made me ‘acceptable’ in the local context, but it also, inevitably, made me seem an affiliate of the household of Apu Mehedi. If the topic of my study had been local politics, then this would have been fairly disastrous, especially as ‘my’ household was a central part in a local conflict over water rights that involved several villages¹⁴. As my focus was something straightforward and open – people going to places and returning – my ‘association’ was, so I felt, less of a problem.

The intermediary

Using an intermediary served two purposes. One was the issue of translating from Balti to English, as my understanding of both Balti and Urdu was rather basic. The other, equally important, purpose was related to the general issue of establishing a rapport with the local population. *Thalaypa* live in a demarcated area, and those coming from outside that area are viewed with reservation and generally classified according to where they come from. The ‘Pathan’ would be the potato trader, coming to Thalay once every year, and ‘Punjabi’ would be the label stuck to anyone coming from lowland Pakistan.

By working with Murad Ali, a local high school teacher, and his brother, Youssaf, I managed to meet both purposes. Both brothers had worked as high altitude mountain guides for a number of years, and they had built up a good command of English. At the same time they were members of one of the most respected families in the valley

¹⁴ See chapter five for a short account of the conflict.

The survey

Normally when developing a questionnaire, this is likely to happen after a period of familiarisation with the object/area of investigation, thus ensuring the relevance of the issues covered in the survey. But as I had spent time in the valley previously, and carried out a questionnaire-based survey at village level, I considered it feasible to design a questionnaire during my short stay in August 1998. Furthermore, this would give my research assistants two winters to complete the survey.

The purpose of the questionnaire was three-fold: To gain an overall picture of livelihood-related activities, asset composition, and migration practices; to establish an understanding of intra-valley differences in relation to livelihood strategies and migration practices; to identify respondents for more topic-focused, individual interviews.

Table 3.2 Coverage of survey in Thalay

Village name	Household number	Households surveyed	% coverage
Khasurmik	32	32	100
Daltir	115	70	61
Ludas	12	6	50
Baltoro	92	67	74
Broqpa	26	25	96
Tagary	60	36	60
Yearkhor	118	87	74
Chundo	70	23	33
Gagoderik	28	25	89
Tasso	35	3	12
Hadangus	46	32	70
Padangus	36	28	78
Burdas	72	57	79
Total	745	491	66

Individual interviews

As suggested in figure 3.1, the intention was to pursue the interplay between intensive and extensive research in the fieldwork design. Accordingly the selection of respondents for individual interviews was carried out after a preliminary perusal of the completed questionnaires,

and as a result of observations and meetings during the course of my stay. The selection process was based on the following criteria: Different practices of migration and residential mobility; government servants; the link to Karachi.

The move from selection of interviewees to the actual interview depended on two factors: the availability of the respondents and their willingness to talk to me. Availability proved the biggest obstacle. As it was past the farming season, the local men had more time on their hands, but this also meant that they were more likely to move around – going to Skardu for shopping or work purposes, to other villages, often outside Thalay, to take part in wedding celebrations. The willingness of respondents to talk to me was only really an issue in relation to retired service men. My focus on the trajectories of migrants who had been employed in the army led to speculations that I was an Indian spy! Furthermore, a number of the retired servicemen refused to talk to me, because when they left the army they had made a pledge not to discuss military matters. Apart from that, the most common response to a request for an interview was more like an amused bewilderment: what could they possibly know that would be of interest to me.

The ensuing interviews were semi-structured and based on interview guides, and each interview would normally last 1-2 hours, depending on whether the respondent previously had been part of the survey. The interviews would in most cases take place in the living room/bed room of the interviewee, but in some cases also outside the house of the informant or further out in the public realm. Though never explicitly stated, this appeared to be the case more frequently when interviewing poorer respondents.

Due to the general suspicion against the outsider, I had decided not to make use of a tape recorder. Instead, I took down notes during each interview, added my own observations immediately after the interview, and wrote summaries of each interview on my computer at the end of the day, when the electricity came on – still separating the summaries from my own notes.

Observations

The ability to observe – be it physical structures, social differences, behaviour, etc. provides important information for posing central questions (Mikkelsen 1995: 74). As Pred puts it: “The unsaid may result from the unasked, from the unstated question rather than the repressed answer, from the central or taken-for-granted concerns of the interviewer rather than the central experiences of the interviewee” (Pred 1990, in MacDonald 1994: 24). Being there is about the observation that becomes a question that would otherwise not have been, and it is about

establishing a thorough understanding of the context. By living in a household, not exactly as a member but rather an honoured appendix, I gained a familiarity with both intra-household dynamics and community life as such. I took part in two wedding celebrations, witnessed the local elections in early November 1999, and took part in a meeting in relation to the conflict over water resources that involved five villages in the valley.

Then who was I in the Thalay communities? The optimal position for the researcher might be that of a multi linguistic fly on the wall, all over and unnoticed. I never managed that, my poor command of Balti and Urdu prevented me from participating actively in everyday life without the presence of my interpreter. In the household where I had been living for five weeks in 1995, I was, on my return, greeted as *ngai angrez*, our stranger, thereby cementing my position as an outsider with whom some familiarity was acknowledged. Others, who came to see me and Youssaf as inseparable twins, called us ‘brothers’. It would, however, be difficult to argue that I was anything else than what Lobo terms a ‘privileged stranger’ (Lobo 1990), thus, according to Lobo, not sufficiently near the culture that constitutes the object of study.

3.3.2 Fieldwork in Karachi

My fieldwork in Karachi was carried out in two stages. The first, December 1999 to January 2000, was intended to gain a foothold in the city, based on the contacts that I had established in Baltistan. It was also, more than anything, a confidence-building exercise, intended to ‘probe’ an area that for over ten years had been known for frequent, often bloody outbursts of political and sectarian violence, and where fairly little research had been carried out during that period. Arriving at Karachi railway station in December 1999 was a nervy experience, with flashbacks of news stories concerning political killings, sectarian strife and wide spread *dacoitism* (bandits) in Karachi. So my decision to stay that first month at an upmarket hotel in Sadaar, the central part of the city, was motivated by this insecurity.

The second fieldwork in Karachi took place in the period December 2000-March 2001, and, having overcome my caution, I exchanged the comfort of a hotel room in central Karachi for a modest flat in Abessinia Lines, just outside the oldest Balti *mohallah* in Karachi. The living quarters had been organized by Balti acquaintances in Karachi, but other Baltis were strongly opposed to the arrangement, as I was staying outside *their* neighbourhood. They did not know my neighbours, and thus they distrusted them.

As in Thalay, I was treated as a guest rather than an intruder. More of an independent actor, with

my own base, I visited people and I received visitors. Social visits to especially Balti *chapars*, ‘village houses’, became part of my approach. As the majority of the Baltis in Karachi are, or have been, receiving education in the city, many were able to communicate in English, so my linguistic incapacity was a lesser handicap. In fact informal English teaching became a way of ‘getting stories’.

Fieldwork approach

The first challenge was to establish an understanding of Balti presence in the city where the 20-30,000 Baltis, according to their own estimates, constitute a rather small minority that is even often confused with Balouchis. It soon transpired that besides kin relations it was the village community – as manifested in the *chapar*, or village house – and religious affiliation that were the most prominent points of identification. As will be elaborated in chapter seven, the village house, an either owned or rented house unit, constitutes the representation of a specific village or valley in Karachi, and as such it is a nexus of activities at the community level. News from home is channelled through the village house, and casual visitors from the native village are accommodated here.

The more structured part of my itinerary derived from my stay in Thalay. Here I had made a list of *Thalaypa* residing in Karachi, and in many cases I had carried out interviews with members of the same domestic unit back home in Thalay. Again the purpose was to examine the migrant situation from different perspectives.

The interplay between extensive and intensive research, which I pursued in Thalay, was not feasible in Karachi. Here the biggest challenge proved to be to actually find the migrants from Thalay. The understanding of common patterns characterising Balti migrants in Karachi was deduced from the individual interviews, carried out with Thalay migrants, and developed further through discussions with Balti migrants living in different *charpars*. So my understanding of Balti livelihoods in Karachi – anyway less transparent than in the villages – is not pinned up on an overall picture that the extensive research should provide, but rather informed by a reading of secondary sources related to the overall migration dynamics in a Karachi context.

The intention to look up ‘the other half’ of migrant situations, which I had established in Thalay, proved much more difficult than anticipated. In Thalay residential areas and work areas often overlap, or they are adjacent to each other. Besides, it would usually be possible to ‘track’ a respondent, because fellow villagers would know where he had gone. In Karachi, work,

education, and free time are much more strictly demarcated categories, which often take place in different parts of the city. The consequence of this was that finding the respondents proved very time-consuming, and interviews could, by and large, only take place during the evenings and on Sundays. Altogether this meant that my approach became more diffuse than intended. Rather than only specific individuals, identified at the other end of the migrant trajectory in Thalay, and thus well rooted in the context of a specific household, the focus group came to comprise migrants from Thalay per se. Altogether it was possible to meet 32 migrants, or just over half the male Thalay migrants in Karachi. As to the rest, basic information was made available from the records of Thalay Welfare Organisation.

3.4 Data analysis

Upon return from my final fieldwork, I entered the quantitative data from the survey into an excel spread sheet, organising the household data according to villages and thus establishing a household level understanding of livelihoods, which reflected the diversity within the valley. I subdivided the data on the basis of the nature of migration practices the households were involved in. My analysis of the qualitative interviews was based on the summaries made during my stay in Thalay. The interviews were subdivided into different categories. From each summary I deducted specific, quantifiable data

The data from Karachi were of a less quantitative nature, and they largely derived from semi-structured interviews based on interview guides, which enabled me to cover the same, central aspects of the migrant trajectory in each interview – e.g. motivation(s) for migration, employment and educational pattern. After the interviews I followed the same procedure as in Thalay and wrote summaries of each interview. As part of the analysis I then deducted some specific, quantifiable data from each interview – e.g. length of stay, nature and length of employment, frequency of visits to Thalay. This then enabled me to establish a more proper, empirically based understanding of Thalay migrants in Karachi.

The main problem about my collection and interpretation of qualitative data was that there was no precise point at which data collection ended and analysis began. This reflects a well-known problem in fieldwork: “A major procedural concern for fieldworkers [...] is knowing how to determine if one is discovering or interpreting or inventing or explaining. Plainly, ethnographers operate in all of these modes while in the field” (Kirk and Miller 1986: 6). In un- or semi-structured interview situations, the interpretation of one answer lays the ground for the next question, and thus the thematic direction of the interview can be seen as governed by this

constant process of interpretation.

As opposed to the taped interview, where the spoken words are conserved and can be interpreted when some distance to the object of enquiry has been established, my interpretation of data would unavoidably start in the process of turning notes into text, as I would do as a daily routine. In order to avoid further filtering of data and make the text as accessible as possible, the unedited summaries of qualitative interviews carried out in respectively Thalay and Karachi are enclosed in the annexes A and B.

It must be added that the final data analysis was seriously impeded by the unfortunate incident that my house burned down in May 2005 – and with that all handwritten notes and questionnaires, leaving me with only the parts of the data material that had been computerised. An implication is that it has not been possible to refer back to the actual notes written down in the interview situation.

3.4.1 Reliability

Reliability concerns the level of randomness in a particular measure, and it represents the degree to which the findings are independent of accidental circumstances of the research (Kirk and Miller 1986: 20). Overall, it can be argued, the combination of different research methods – the quantitative survey, the qualitative interviews, the direct observations – strengthens the reliability. Inherent in the bi-local approach is what I will term a methodological triangulation that is highly important for the proper understanding of migration practices. The understandings and interpretations of migration, which have emerged during fieldwork in ‘the sending community’, are ‘tested’ in the urban context where the migrant’s actions can be analysed independently of his domestic unit.

By carrying out a survey over two winters, the reliability of the data is obviously challenged by possible changes in circumstances that are external to the enquiry, but nevertheless can influence the results. For example, climatic fluctuations would influence water supply for agricultural production, and this would impact the yields harvested – and thus also impact the quantities of wheat that it is necessary to purchase from outside the valley. According to farmers in Thalay, both the 1999 and 2000 harvest were fairly close to what they would consider normal, and for this reason I have made use of data collected in both 1999 and 2000 in the same tables.

A similar criticism can be made in relation to migration practices, especially if these are seen as

responses to food deficits. However, the survey established that especially the seasonal migrant practices would seem to be well-established, recurring moves, often going back many years, and thus seemingly not reflecting demand-supply fluctuations at household level.

Gathering data on income and capital is inherently difficult, and the difficulty does not decrease when those gathering the data are known to the respondents. I have in the analysis chosen to present household income data on a village basis in order to illustrate the dependence on non-local and non-agricultural resources. Furthermore, it was relatively easy to cross-check the limited number of different income sources and thus assure the relative reliability of the data.

The balance between width and depth in the analysis is always a delicate one, and it is an open question whether the choice to opt for a valley focus, and thus aim to capture the diversity within Thalay, should have been replaced by more analytical emphasis on the nature and process of social stratification within a village in the valley. The ambitious decision to opt for the entire valley was partly motivated by the observation from my first fieldwork in 1995 that there were considerable differences between the villages in the valley, partly by the understanding, also from 1995, that *Thalaypa* saw themselves very much as a whole, a bit apart from the rest of the region.

3.4.2 The small issue of half the population

It can be argued that the biggest problem concerning the validity of the study is related to gender. Can a piece of research claim to focus on livelihood strategies without being able to access half the population living these livelihoods? I will argue that it can, but also that it must be accepted that there are limits to the depth and detail that the analysis can provide. Conceptualisations of livelihoods developed in a European context have tended to lean on the concept of life world, defined by Schutz as ‘the lived-in’ and ‘taken-for-granted’ world of the social actor (Schutz 1962, in Long 2001: 54). It is a perspective that depends on the full ability to query inter-individual action within the household, and thus have access to all household members.

The implication of this is not that women’s activities remain an absolute unknown in the analysis. Through direct observation – within households and in villages – an understanding of the gendered organisation of space and livelihood activities was established. But as opposed to the observation of other phenomena, which often trigger the logical enquiry – observation -> question -> answer -> interpretation – there is here a more direct leap from observation to interpretation, and thus a need to be even more cautious in the analysis.

A couple of incidents served to demonstrate the limits to enquiries into women's activities. In 1995, the (wrongly held) assumption that I had made a photo of a local woman became a rumour that spread very rapidly in the valley, and in 1999 a rapid remark – “why do you ask about my sister” – served to define ‘the no-go area’. Altogether, the position of the ‘privileged stranger’ may also be as good as it gets for the non-Muslim male researcher in a strictly Muslim environment, and the ambition of the research will need to be adjusted accordingly¹⁵.

¹⁵ Here the position of female researchers is enviable, as Herbers observes in her study from Yasin, a valley in the Gilgit District: “... der besondere Umstand, dass eine europäische Forscherin im islamischen Land Pakistan nahezu uneingeschränkten Zugang zur männlichen wie weiblichen Sphäre hat, ermöglichte eine intensive Partizipation am täglichen Leben der Bevölkerung” (Herbers 1998: 28). Translation: „The particular circumstance that a female European researcher in the Islamic country of Pakistan has almost unlimited access to the male as well as the female spheres enables an intensive participation in the everyday life of the population“ (by author). During his nine months fieldwork in Askole, in the upper part of the Shigar Valley in Baltistan, MacDonald probably reaches the limits of the action space that the male researcher commands: “Inside the village, I sat and watched women work, talk and nurse their children. I ate and drank with women. This occurred even when my male hosts were away from the village [...] As a male, I could not enter the world of true women's space; the setting and interaction of women with women. By virtue of being male, my presence would directly affect what was said to me and what would be said amongst women in my presence” (MacDonald 1994: 35).

Chapter Four

Background: The territorialisation of Pakistan and the Northern Areas

4.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the ‘larger story’ of Pakistan as a territorialising regime. By providing an understanding of the means and constraints characterising the process of territorialisation, both in the territory of the Pakistani state and in the Pakistani-held part of Kashmir known as the Northern Areas, I aim to define and give substance to the entity within which the horizontal dimension of mountain livelihoods in Baltistan evolves.

It should be stressed that my aim here is not to provide a detailed account of the history of Pakistan, but rather to examine aspects of the process whereby the Pakistani state is territorialising the area it controls. As suggested in chapter two, the starting point for such an examination should be an analysis of the conditions, under which the state operates, followed by an examination of the means whereby the territorialisation is carried out. This includes a focus on the Islamic ‘ideal’ which serves as the foundation of the country, and the regional diversity which challenges its unity. The means whereby the territorialisation is happening involves a focus on the ‘infrastructural powers’, which can be attributed to the civil bureaucracy and the armed forces, as well as the introduction and use of Urdu as a national language and medium of instruction.

In the second part of the chapter I will focus on strategies and implementation of the territorialisation process, which apply to the part of Pakistani-held Kashmir, which is known as the Northern Areas¹⁶. Commencing with a short account of practices of control and territorialisation prior to the establishment of Pakistan, I will present the most important aspects of the territorialisation process, as it has evolved since 1947.

4.1 Territorialising Pakistan

Initially born of an all-Indian opposition towards the British colonial power, but increasingly also fuelled by an escalating animosity between Hindi and Muslim partakers in this struggle, the independence of British India in 1947 also resulted in a division according to religious affiliation. Accordingly, Pakistan – consisting of respectively a western and an eastern wing – came into existence on August 14th 1947 as a homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Pakistan has been labelled as an ‘over-developed state, a ‘bureaucratic polity’ and a ‘garrison state’ (Talbot 1998: 7) – apart from the frequently used, but less specific label of a ‘failed state’¹⁷. It can be argued that such terms are not unique to Pakistan, and that they can be taken to reflect a state-society divide, which is intensified in many post-colonial situations because of the disjunction between cultural and territorial boundaries (Talbot 1998: 8). It is this disjunction, which the territorialising regime aims to bridge by developing trans-local institutions and practices. The three ‘fundamental and perhaps insoluble problems’, which Kennedy identifies in his discussion of Pakistan’s political development since 1947, are central to an understanding of both central elements of the Pakistani territorialisation process and the obstacles which that same process is encountering (Kennedy 1987: 1-3)¹⁸.

The problem of the role of Islam. Whereas the emergence of Pakistan was a consequence of the ideological demand for the establishment of an Islamic state, the specifically Islamic nature of the state has remained contested.

¹⁶ Pakistani-held Kashmir also includes Azad Kashmir further south. It is a smaller territory, but much more densely populated. Similar to the Northern Areas, the status of Azad Kashmir has never been recognised in international law (Talbot 1998: 118).

¹⁷ Likewise, Pakistan’s post-independence political development has been summed up in terms of ‘the three A’s’ – Allah, the Army and America – referring to respectively the role of Islam as the *raison d’être* of the country, the army as the stabilising and controlling force, with generals ruling the country for more than half of the time it has been in existence, and a geopolitical situation where US interests – e.g. in relation to Afghanistan – has been seen to condition developments in Pakistan.

¹⁸ Though Kennedy’s work is based on an analysis of Pakistani politics in the mid-1980s, events which have characterised the last two decades would seem to have confirmed the relevance of the issues, which he raises. For a more recent discussion, see Jaffrelot 2002.

The problem of integrating competing regional demands within the context of the nation-state. These demands reflect the formation of Pakistan through the amalgamation of several distinct cultural entities, resulting in what Kennedy terms ‘centrifugal tendencies’ which are reflected in periodic separatist sentiment in different parts of the country – of course with the secession of Bangladesh in 1971 as the most prominent example.

The problem of achieving balanced levels of institutional development. Whereas Pakistan inherited well-developed civil and military bureaucracies, it has been difficult to establish strong and lasting countervailing institutions – legislatures, political parties, and local government institutions.

4.1.1 Islam

Pakistan emerged as a country of and for Muslims, and the religious identity served as a unifier for different ethnic groups in the struggle for independence in the post-colonial period. The ‘two nation theory’ was based on the premise that the Muslims of the subcontinent were a separate nation from their Hindu neighbours, and the basic principle behind the demarcation of the territory, which was to become Pakistan, was religious affiliation.

Despite this, the actual role of Islam was never clear. The spiritual heart of the Pakistan movement, Alama Iqbal, saw Islam as the blueprint of social order: “The religious ideal of Islam is organically related to the social order which it has created” (in Naipaul 1998: 365). Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, nourished the image of a secular state for Muslims: “You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan [...] You may belong to any religion of caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the state” (Jinnah 1948, in Ahmed 1996). This was Jinnah’s vision of Pakistan, inspired by Atatürk’s Turkey that emerged from the ruins of the Ottoman empire in 1922. However, Jinnah died in 1948, and the idea of the secular state did not survive him for long. When the first constitution of Pakistan was finalised in 1956, the Republic of Pakistan had become the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Talbot 1998). But both the 1956 constitution and subsequent constitutions of 1962, 1972 and 1973 only paid ‘lip service’ to the Islamic nature of the state and little was done to implement policy demands according to orthodox interpretations of Islam (Kennedy 1987: 2).

This changed after general Zia-ul-Haq came into power in 1977. The Zia regime reworked the

foundational myth in order to posit Jinnah as demanding Pakistan in order to establish not just a homeland for the nation of Indian Muslims, but an Islamic state (Talbot 1998: 5). Enjoying support from especially Saudi Arabia, Zia made Sunni *mullahs* his allies, and initiated legislative work with a great reliance on the establishment of an Islamic order (*Nizam-i-Islam*) in Pakistan. Overall, Zia's islamisation policy claimed to manifest a universal Islamic vision, but in reality it was based on narrow Sunni interpretation of Islamic theology and law, and it was therefore unacceptable to Shi'is (Jaffrelot 2002: 28)¹⁹. The Shi'is of Pakistan, on the other hand, were encouraged by the Iranian revolution in 1979 (Ahmed 1996: 177). The ensuing strife between the majority Sunnis and the Shi'is, constituting approximately 15% of the Pakistani population, has been a characteristic of Pakistani society ever since. So from the late 1970s onwards, Islam – the unifier – became the site of struggle, and the founding idea of the nation had become "...the battle ground of Middle Eastern proxy wars, albeit so far on a small scale" (Ahmed 1996: 178). It might be argued that the scale of these 'proxy wars' has increased. The 12,000 madrassas, which were opened as part of Zia's islamisation policy (Talbot 1998: 279), became a breeding ground for both the Taliban movement, which eventually gained power in Afghanistan, and for the *Mujaheddin* fighters who during the 1990s 'took over' the insurgency in Indian-held Kashmir.

Later governments have been considerably less concerned with pursuing islamisation policies, but they have also proved unable to prevent tensions and clashes between Sunni and Shi'i fractions and arrest the slide in certain parts of the country towards a political rule based on Islamic legislation – as evidenced in the North West Frontier Province where provincial elections in 2002 were won by a coalition of religious parties, the *Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal* (Wilder 2004)²⁰.

4.1.2 Regionalism

When Pakistan came into existence in 1947, it was as a territory where existing nationalities were to have a new one ascribed – they became Pakistanis. All the people, who are known as Pakistanis, are bound to have roots, which penetrate deeper in history, and grow from specific parts of the country²¹.

¹⁹ "Another factor which undermined the impact of Islamisation was [...] its emphasis on the regulative, punitive and extractive aspects of Islam, rather than on its social and economic egalitarianism" (Talbot 1998: 271-72).

²⁰ See Nasr (2000) for a detailed discussion of the rise of Sunni militancy in Pakistan, and Wilder (2004) for an analysis of the 2002 National and Provincial Assembly elections.

²¹ In his analysis of Pakistan's political development since 1947, Ian Talbot opens by referring to the Pushtun nationalist Wali Khan, who in 1990 declared that he had been a Pushtun for 4,000 years, a Muslim for 1,400 years, and a Pakistani for 40 years (Talbot 1998: 1). Similarly, a Bengali student remarked in 1948, during the language controversy: "I am first of all a Bengali, then I am a Muslim, then Pakistani" (in Rahman 1996: 86).

Geographically, the regionalism was most manifest in the division of Pakistan into two wings – East and West Pakistan. Whereas East Pakistan, also known as East Bengal, was more populous than the Western wing, the country was from the onset ruled from the West – with first Karachi and then Islamabad as capital cities. Urdu, hardly spoken in Bangladesh, was made the national language, and the army was dominated by Punjabis. When the first general elections, held in 1970, resulted in victory for a candidate from East Pakistan, the ruling politicians in West Pakistan refused to accept the result, and a civil war erupted. As a result of this, East Pakistan separated from the West and became the independent country of Bangladesh.

Regionalist sentiments and tensions were not defused with the secession of Bangladesh. They were rather redirected. Since the breakaway of East Bengal in 1971, the Punjab has maintained a majority of the total population of Pakistan (Talbot 2002: 52), as shown in table 4.1, and an estimated 85% of the Pakistani army is of Punjabi origin. In Balouchistan, the difference to Pathans is articulated in cultural

Table 4.1 Pakistan's population by province, 1998

	Population (millions)	Proportion of total (%)
NWFP ¹	17.7	13.4
FATA ²	3.2	2.3
Punjab	73.6	55.6
Sindh	30.4	23.1
Balouchistan	6.6	5.0
Islamabad	0.8	0.6
Total ³	132.3	100.0

Source: Government of Pakistan 1999

1) North West Frontier Province

2) Federally Administered Tribal Areas

3) The figures do not include the population of the Northern Areas

terms, whereas Punjabis are identified with the government of Pakistan, and as such they are looked upon as holding a power that is considered oppressive (Fabietti 1996: 5)²². As Kennedy puts it, regionalist sentiments are, most importantly, fuelled by “... the persistent perception that the Punjab dominates the political life of the nation” (Kennedy 1987: 3).

²² See Talbot (2002) for an analysis of the historical circumstances behind ‘The Punjabization of Pakistan’. A parallel can be found in Afghanistan, where non-Pashtun ethnic group have been known to view nation-building as a process of ‘Pashtunization’, where non-Pashtuns were not able to compete on equal terms with the Pashtuns (Christensen 1995: 50).

The *Mohajirs* are known as the fifth nationality of Pakistan, after the Balouchis, the Pashtuns, the Punjabis, and the Sindhis. They also constitute the only population group in Pakistan, who are not ‘sons of the soil’, as they originally were refugees, deriving from different parts of India and moving to Pakistan after Partition. But as they came from the same milieu as the architects of Pakistan, and many of them spoke the same language, Urdu, their influence was immediate and without any proportion to their number – even more so as the majority of *Mohajirs* settled in towns and cities, especially in Karachi, the temporary capital, where their higher educational standards and command of Urdu made them qualified for government jobs at the expense of the indigenous Sindhi population (Jaffrelot 2002: 16). Over the years, and especially since the early 1970s, this has resulted in tensions and clashes between *Mohajirs* and Sindhis, and eventually the word *Mohajir*, which had once been used to distinguish the group of people, who had left their homes in favour of the sacred community, became a way of demarcating boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Once it had meant ‘welcome’. Now it meant: ‘you are not from here’ (Verkaaik 1994: 13)²³. Eventually that very heterogeneous group, defined by exclusion in relation to the overall society rather than inherent similarities, adopted the epithet given to them and mobilized as a political organization, the Mohajir Quomi Movement (MQM) in 1984, Quomi meaning nation.

In the introduction to his work on Pakistan – with the perhaps appropriate subheading ‘nationalism without a nation’ – Jaffrelot states that “Pakistan appears to be an unachieved nation precisely because of the persistence of ethnic identities which may even be described as nationalities” (Jaffrelot 2002: 7). Along the same vein, commenting on the ability of Pakistani governments to deal with and integrate the different nationalities, Talbot has referred to the emergence of a ‘fearful state’ which is repressive of internal dissent, fearing that ethno-nationalist movement in Sindh, Balouchistan and the NWFP may follow the Bengali precedent (Talbot 1998: 33). What follows might be characterised as ‘territorialisation in reverse’, as the Pakistani state would seem to alienate the groups it aims to constitute and represent, and the state eventually becomes “...the very institution an ethnic group sees as its rival”, as Verkaaik writes in his discussion of the MQM (Verkaaik 1994: 7).

My aim here is not to take these comments any further, but rather point to the continued

²³ The metaphors used by the respective ethnic groups in order to characterise the other groups are illuminating: “*Mohajirs* themselves used *akhrote* (walnuts) for Pathans because they are so stubborn you cannot get anything into their heads. *Choupaya* (animal) and *paindoo* (villager) both refer to the agricultural occupation and attitude of mind *Mohajirs* found characteristic of Punjabis and Sindhis respectively. Sindhis hit back with *makhar*, a locust who eats too much of its share. Meant, and taken, as more serious insults, however, were words that flatly referred to *Mohajirs*’ Indian past, like *Hindustani*. ” (Verkaaik 1994: 13).

relevance of ethnically based regional affiliations, and to the need for the territorialisation process to control and accommodate such affiliations.

4.2 Infrastructural techniques of the Pakistani territorialisation process

Borrowing from the terminology introduced by Mann in his discussion of the territorialisation process in chapter two, I will in the following present the characteristics of the most prominent infrastructural techniques used by the Pakistani state in order to territorialise the area it controls. These techniques include: Government service and the armed forces; the quota system of regional representation; the introduction of Urdu as national language and medium of instruction.

4.2.1 Government service and the armed forces

As mentioned previously in this chapter, Pakistan has been characterised as a ‘bureaucratic polity’ as well as a ‘garrison state’ (Talbot 1998: 7). Whereas such labels of course reflect generalisations, there is little doubt that government service/civil bureaucracy and the armed forces do constitute the most prominent infrastructural techniques, which the Pakistani state commands.

The establishment and nature of government service in Pakistan can be traced back to the British colonial administration and their need for “.. a class who may be interpreters”²⁴, and who was crafted to suit the needs of a colonial power, namely to rule a subject people (Kennedy 1987: 3). What the new state inherited was an administrative system, which “... demonstrated highly complex patterns of organisation, well-established forms of socialisation for its members, and a remarkable degree of institutional autonomy” (ibid: 4).

This high level of organisation should be seen as set against a political scene, which can be characterised as ‘unstable’. Pakistani politics have been described as personalistic, and “as the charisma wears off, the popular base of each party has begun to decline” (Ahmed 1984, in Talbot 1998: 9). Furthermore, as Pakistan has been ruled by generals for almost half the time the country has been in existence, the development and roles of political parties have been hampered, and for nearly 30 years, since the 1972-77 government of Ali Zulfikar Bhutto, no democratically elected

²⁴ The full quote goes as follows: “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern. A class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect”. The quote, dated 1830, stated the aim of British educational policy in India, ultimately aimed at supplying people for posts in the civil administration.

government has been able to complete its term in office. As Kennedy puts it: "... a fairly accurate way to view the political history of Pakistan is to conceive of the system as manifesting the successive dominance of political leaders [...] who rule through the sufferance of the civil and military bureaucracy. The political leaders are episodically replaced, but the power of the administrative system and the authority of the bulk of its soldiers is impervious to change" (Kennedy 1987: 5).

Another colonial legacy, which relates to the capacity of the state to penetrate civil society, was the institutionalisation of patron-client relationships between the bureaucracy and local elites. In return for different types of patronage, religious and tribal leaders were co-opted by colonial administration to provide political stability and provide revenues. After independence, this patron-client relationship has served to strengthen the image of the bureaucracy as the providers of patronage, influence and security (rather than services), thus again undermining the development and impact of political parties, which normally would have played this role. As those in power control access to jobs in government service, and government service is attractive for reasons linked to power, prestige and job security, access to jobs in government service has become a stake in the political process, so the most politically important form of patronage in Pakistan is by providing jobs in the bureaucracy (Wilder 1999).

Whereas civil bureaucracy/government service constitutes a means to impose a regime domestically, the role of the army should ideally be to control the Pakistani territorial state against outside forces – a task which became more complicated than expected before 1947. In the early 1940s, Jinnah had argued that in case of an independent Pakistan, India would be protected by an independent Muslim state to its northwest, shielding it from both Islamic and Soviet pressures (Cohen 1984: 6). This was not to be, and the shield became a sword, as the conflict over Kashmir, which evolved in the immediate aftermath of partition, came to define Indo-Pakistani relations. Still unresolved, this conflict has resulted in three wars – 1947-48, 1965, and (at a more limited scale) 1999 – and to this should be added the 1971 civil war where India interfered in support of East Pakistan. Furthermore, the conflict with India also came to justify high spending on the armed forces, by 2004 numbering 620,000, and the investment of considerable resources in the development of nuclear capacity, culminating in the test of a nuclear device in May 1998, in response to Indian tests two weeks earlier (Ganguly 2001: 101).

At the same time, the armed forces have throughout the existence of Pakistan played an important domestic role in the country. Pakistan has been ruled by generals for long periods – Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan (1958-71), Zia Ul-Haq (1977-88), and Pervez Musharraf (1999-present) – and

the armed forces have been used to quell ethno-regionalist separatist movements, most notably the autonomist insurrection of 1973-76 in Balouchistan. With reference to this as well as the events leading to the secession of Bangladesh, Talbot notes how the Pakistani government “...depressingly repeated the pattern of the state hampering national integration by provoking regional opposition through its violent suppression of legitimate demands” (Talbot 1998: 224).

Tab 4.2 Total public sector employment

	2001
Civil Central Government	697,000
Sub-national government	412,000
Education employees	900,400
Health employees	183,200
Police	212,400
Armed Forces	587,000
Employees at state-owned enterprises	424,100
Total public employment	3,416,100

Source: DESA 2004

Table 4.2 provides another insight into the role of government service and the armed forces, namely the total number of employees who via their employment hold a monthly income for at least 20 years, as well as a pension after retirement. It has been estimated that the public sector employs around 8% of the Pakistani labour force (World Bank 1998). But a complete picture of the extent of public sector employment should ideally also include those who have been employed in civil service or the armed forces and who receive monthly pension payments upon retirement – as well as sizeable lump sums, known as commutation payments, the actual amount depending on rank and duration of service.

Overall, the public sector has grown by 24% since the late 1980s, with the bulk of expansion taking place at low skill levels where there is already substantial overstaffing (*ibid*)²⁵, in part due to the above mentioned practice of rewarding ‘clients’ with jobs in government service. Attempts have been made to reform public administration by reducing overstaffing, improve the level of service delivery, make employment more merit-based, and do away with aspects of the hugely expensive pension schemes, and work on such reforms has so far progressed very slowly.

In summary, the armed forces and government service are visible, well-organised infrastructural

²⁵ Examples of overstaffing: “... in 1996 there were 14,500 employees in the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), whereas only about 6,000 were required [...] KFA staff is over 7,000 and its Director General is on record as saying that he requires no more than 2,000 employees to run the organisation (Hasan 1999: 33).

techniques, which are so powerful that it can be argued that they are the state, and that the infrastructural power actually has become a despotic one – even more so as Pakistan has been ruled by the army since 1999. But it is important to emphasize the role of the armed forces and, especially, government service as highly attractive employment opportunities, providing long-term livelihood security.

4.2.1 The quota system of regional representation

The quota system is, it can be argued, one of the most important means to ‘counter’ the influence of regionalism in the Pakistani state-building project by ensuring that the different regions within Pakistan get ‘their fair share’ in terms of jobs in government service and access to educational institutions.

The rationale behind the quota system of regional representation goes all the way back to the pre-independence discourse of British India. Muslims saw themselves as under-represented in the civil service, the military, and educational institutions, and this under-representation was part of the argument made for the necessity of an Islamic state (Kennedy 1987: 186). After independence in 1947, the quota system was invented in order to balance the gross under-representation of Bengalis in the civilian bureaucracy, with the intention of phasing it out over five to ten years (Kennedy 1987: 187). In 1949 a federal quota system was introduced, whereby 80% of the vacancies in the Central Superior Services were to be filled in according to the domicile of the applicants, with the remaining 20% filled in according to merit²⁶.

Though the initial motivation for the quota system disappeared with the secession of Bangladesh in 1971, it was continued in a modified version under the rule of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, with the motivation that “...the quota was a necessary expedient designed to close the gap between levels of development while promoting national integration” (Kennedy 1987: 186). At the same time the number of people who could make use of the quota system, grew considerably. The nationalization of numerous industries, which was carried out 1972-75, meant that industries formerly in the private sector became subject to the terms and conditions of federal employment (ibid: 188) – and, consequently, that this type of employment became an option for many more people.

²⁶ The remaining 80% of the vacancies were to be filled by the application of the following formula: East Pakistan 40%; Punjab and Bahawalpur 23%; Karachi 2%; Sindh, Khairpur, NWFP, Tribal Areas, Balouchistan, Azad Kashmir, and Kashmir refugees 15%

The modified quota system, still in operation, is depicted in table 4.3. Most contested was the division of the province of Sindh into ‘Urban Sindh’ and ‘Rural Sindh’. This was meant to curb the influence of the generally better educated *Mohajir* population, who mainly resided in Karachi and Hyderabad, and assure a quota for the rural population of Sindh, who also happened to be Bhutto’s constituency (Talbot 1998: 221)²⁷. Though Bhutto’s Sindhi agenda does constitute a special case, the division of Sindh also serves to highlight a drawback of the quota system, as the system in its pursue of equal regional representation is ‘blind’ to inequalities of intra-provincial representation. As the criterion for favoured status is largely ascribed – based on domicile – and not based on need or merit, it follows that the quota is likely to favour the relatively ‘well-off’ candidate from both backward and developed regions (Kennedy 1987: 197).

Tab 4.3 Quota system of regional representation

Area of domicile	Quota (%)
Punjab/Islamabad	50
NWFP	11.5
Rural Sindh	11.4
Urban Sindh	7.6
Northern Areas/FATA	4.0
Balouchistan	3.5
Azad Kashmir	2.0
Merit	10.0
Total	100.0

Source: Kennedy 1987.

Further attempts to modify the quota system have never been successful. As Kennedy concludes: “The quota has become a political bombshell. Any modification of the terms of the quota would likely be interpreted as favouring some groups at the expense of others” (Kennedy 1987: 204). It is a catch 22; any attempt at undoing the existing model, based on ethnic preference, will provoke an accusation of exactly that, ethnic preference, as a more merit-based system is likely to favour candidates from parts of Punjab and urban Sindh where educational levels generally are higher. So this can be seen as the drawback of the nation building effort, or the contradiction within that effort. Whereas the principle of ‘redistributional ethnic preference’ (Kennedy 1987: 181) can be considered a nation-building device, the linkage between entitlements and a site-specific ethnic belonging can be seen to result in a strengthened identification with the ethnic group at the

²⁷ The resentments caused by this ‘division’ of Sindh and by the extension of the quota to educational institutions lay behind the decision to found the All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organisation in 1978. This was the direct precursor of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement, which came into existence six years later (Talbot 1998: 221). Furthermore, the demographic picture within Sindh has shifted since the early 1970s. Whereas 59% of the population of Sindh were living in rural Sindh in 1972, the proportion was down to 51% in the 1998 census (Government of Pakistan 1999).

expense of the state.

However, the quota system of regional representation also means that it is easier for individuals belonging to a region to gain access to government employment and education outside that region. Whereas the quota by and large reflects the demographic picture in Pakistan, the smaller provinces and administrative areas would seem to have been slightly favoured at the expense of the bigger provinces – like the Punjab and Sindh. For example, the 4% of the quota commanded by the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the Northern Areas is higher than the proportion of the Pakistani population who actually lives in these areas (approximately 3%).

4.2.3 Urdu as the *lingua franca*

Urdu was invested with particular emotional significance by the founders of Pakistan, because it was part of the drive for Muslim separatism up to 1947, symbolic of the Pakistani Muslim identity in the making (Rahman 1996: 230), and it was stressed by Jinnah as a vital nation-building device: "Without one State language, no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function. Look at the history of other countries. Therefore so far as the State language is concerned, Pakistan's language shall be Urdu" (M.A. Jinnah: Speeches as Governor-General of Pakistan 1947-48, here in Sardar Ali and Rehman 2001: 25). Furthermore, and vital given the previous discussion of regional differences, Urdu was a common *lingua franca*, which could unify without favouring, as the language, while originating from Arabic, was not indigenous to any of the major ethnic groups in Pakistan.

The decision served to alienate the Bengali-speaking East Pakistan where Urdu largely was unknown. Furthermore, the only native Urdu speakers in Pakistan were the *Mohajirs*, the Muslim refugees from India. Due to their command of Urdu, as well as generally higher educational standards among *Mohajirs*, they were able to access a disproportionate number of positions in the civil bureaucracy, thereby causing dissatisfaction among other population groups, most notably the Sindhis. As mentioned previously, it was this dissatisfaction, which 25 years later resulted in changes to the quota system of regional representation in Sindh.

Altogether, the decision to declare Urdu the national language of Pakistan was only one step towards actually making Urdu the *lingua franca* of the new country. In 1949, promises were made to change the medium of instruction at all levels of education from English to Urdu, and by the late 1960s Urdu was compulsory in all schools up to matriculation. But entry to the most prestigious jobs was still facilitated by English. Rahman sums up the situation in the introduction

to his work on language and politics in Pakistan: “The language of the domains of power – administration, judiciary, military, education, and commerce – is still English, as it was under British rule before 1947. Urdu, however, is the national language of the country and is used in most state schools, at the lower levels of administration, in the media, and in all major cities of the country” (Rahman 1996: 1).

Tab. 4.4 Pakistani population by mother tongue, 1998

Language	Mother tongue (%) ¹
Urdu	7.6
Punjabi	44.2
Sindhi	14.1
Pushto	15.4
Balouch	3.6
Saraiki	10.6
Others	4.7

Source: Government of Pakistan 1999

1) Proportion of the total 1998 Pakistani population

However, only 7.54% of Pakistanis had Urdu as their mother tongue in 1981 (Talbot 1998: 27), and the proportion of native Urdu speakers was, at 7.60%, largely unchanged in the 1998 census (Government of Pakistan 1999). This may support Talbot in his argument that Urdu has proved less effective in promoting a national Pakistani identity than indigenous languages - like Sindhi, Pashto or Balouchi - have been in articulating ethnic identities (Talbot 1998: 26)²⁸. So when Urdu finally, in the early 1980s, emerged as a major political rallying point, it was to promote a *Mohajir* ethnic identity rather than Pakistani nationalism (ibid: 27).

However, the stable proportion of Pakistanis, who have Urdu as their mother tongue, should not be taken to suggest much more than that the *Mohajirs* constitute an unchanged proportion of the Pakistani population. But this does not serve as an indicator of the proportion of the Pakistani population who are Urdu literate. With a literacy ratio of 43.9% at the national level, and with Urdu as the medium of instruction in government schools, it would be a reasonable estimate that the proportion of Urdu literates in Pakistan would be between 30 and 40% – of course with considerable rural-urban and male-female differences.²⁹

²⁸ See Rahman 1996 for a discussion of the different language movements in Pakistan.

²⁹ The literacy ratio refers to the percentage of literate persons among the population of 10 years or above. In 1998, the literacy ratio for the urban population was 63%, for the rural population it was 34%. For men, the literacy ratio was 55%, for women 32% (Government of Pakistan 1999).

4.3 The territorialisation process in the Northern Areas

Previously known as Gilgit-Baltistan, the Northern Areas comprise the northernmost parts of the state of Kashmir. The very term ‘Northern Areas’ is an administrative term, invented and used by the Pakistani government to describe a geographical area claimed by both India and Pakistan, but controlled by Pakistan since 1948. Rather than a province, it is a federally administered area, which is not a constitutional part of Pakistan.

Though the Northern Areas, covering an area of 72,496 km², administratively are seen as one unit – albeit divided into five districts – the analysis of the processes whereby the Northern Areas have been territorialised will here mainly focus on Baltistan, especially as regards the period from 1846 to 1947 when Baltistan was ruled by the Kashmiri Dogras, while the ‘Gilgit Agency’ was under British rule from 1877 to 1947³⁰.

4.3.1 Baltistan

Covering an area of 25,850 km² in the Karakorum mountains, Baltistan has been characterized as not just a high mountain area, but as “...one of the most formidable upland regions on earth, the most heavily glaciated outside the poles” (Middleton 1984: 17), with 33% of the surface area covered by glaziers, as opposed to 11% in the Himalayas (Kreutzmann 1993). But Baltistan is also a cultural landscape, which represents the most south-easterly extension of Islam into the mountain belt that separates the Indian Subcontinent from the rest of Asia, and the Balti language is the most extreme north-westerly extension of the Tibeto-Burman language. All over, the geographic boundaries of Baltistan coincide exactly with the cultural area defined by the intersection of Tibetan speech and Islamic practice (Emerson 1990: 102).

MacDonald has described the history of Baltistan prior to direct contact with Europeans as one of “...occasionally antagonistic relations between serf farmers and feudal-like overlords who were in a constant power struggle with the rulers of small neighbouring states” (MacDonald 1998: 289). Emerson goes into considerably more detail in his study of state-formation in Baltistan, tracing the oldest ruling lineage in Baltistan, the rajah family in Khapulu, back to circa 850 A.D (Emerson 1990: 112). For the purpose of this work it will suffice to identify two broad factors, which are central to the process of state-formation in Baltistan. The first one concerns the ecological circumstances in Baltistan, which favour the formation of relatively large corporate

³⁰ For a recent analysis of the relations between the British and Kashmiri colonial powers in Gilgit Agency, see Sökefeld 2005.

groups capable of mobilising and maintaining relatively large hydraulic projects [irrigation systems]. The strategies and activities pursued by such groups (corporate villages) constitute a part of the empirical analysis (chapter five). The second factor was the domination by a military class over a peasant population in three territories of Baltistan – the rajah states of Skardu, Shigar and Khapulu. Each of these would have ‘satellites’, ruling smaller territories within the rajah states.

Central to an understanding of both the internal organisation at village level and the relations between the villages and the ruling rajahs is the practice of *ress* (turn-taking). Apart from paying taxes, villagers were required by custom to ‘take their turn’ in working for the state, when called upon to do so. They were then paid daily allowances of grain from the central or regional stores (Emerson 1990: 121). At village level, the institution of *ress* remains central to the management of common property resources (for example maintenance of irrigation structures) and reciprocal exchanges of labour and livestock at household level.

4.3.2 The Dogra regime

Vigne, the first European to visit Baltistan in the 1830s, described the population as “...contended, and fond of their native valleys; fearing nothing but the Sikhs and the smallpox” (Vigne 1842: 271). By the time Vigne’s work was published, the fear of the Sikhs had proved justified. In a series of attacks during the 1830s, culminating with the attack on Baltistan and the fall of Skardu in 1840, the Sikhs had taken control over much of what is now known as the Northern Areas. But after the second Anglo-Sikh war of 1846, and the Treaty of Amritsar, the conquered area became an independent maharajah state, ruled by the Dogra lineage.

The Dogra take-over meant that demands on the local population increased as the new administration set about to establish the infrastructure needed to control its territory. Agricultural produce was appropriated in order to supply Dogra garrisons throughout Kashmir, and extensive road construction works were initiated. The local population was subjected to *begar*³¹, forced labour that was used for construction works or transportation of supplies. This type of work was dreaded among the Balti population, work on the Gilgit road was widely known as ‘the journey of death’, and there were accounts of malnutrition and diseases among those working on the road.

³¹ *Begar* has been defined as “forced labour, for the repair of roads, tanks, forts, barracks, and for carrying baggage. Begar, a person compelled to labour” (Balfour 1871, in MacDonald 1998: 290) For more detailed analyses of *begar* in Baltistan, see MacDonald 1998, Polzer and Schmidt 2000. According to Emerson, the institution of *ress* corresponds with the Kashmiri *begar* which evolved into corrupt forced labour (Emerson 1990: 144)

Apart from providing labourers, each *tehsil* (smallest administrative unit) was also obliged to provide provisions and porters for visiting officials of the *Dogra* regime, and for visiting foreigners. Landowners had to pay taxes, in cash or kind, and among old villagers there is still resentment against the ban on the slaughter of cattle, which the Hindu regime imposed. According to MacDonald, in his work on the portering economy of Northern Pakistan, the ethnic label 'Balti' became synonymous with the class label 'coolie' in Kashmir: "Because they are such good carriers, and because the roads through their own and the adjoining countries are so bad, it has fallen out that they are employed more and more for carrying purposes, till the patient, long-suffering Balti coolie has become a well-known feature in the valleys of this frontier" (Younghusband 1887, in MacDonald 1998: 304 (footnote). Altogether the general situation of the Baltis, as depicted by European travellers, is a sorry one: "These poor Baltis, robbed by the tax-farmers of their conquerors, hunted by Kanjuti robbers to be sold as slaves in Central Asia, dragged from their homes to do forced labour on the dreaded Gilgit road, and murdered by their Sunni neighbours, have hitherto dragged on but an insecure and harassed existence among their wild hills and valleys" (Knight 1905: 245).

4.3.3 Partition

The maharajah state of Kashmir was, like the rest of the 544 princely states that constituted one third of the area of British India, in 1947 given the choice of accession to either India or Pakistan. As opposed to most of the other princely states, embedded in one of the emerging countries and thus with little choice but to join in, Kashmir was much bigger, situated outside both India and Pakistan. Furthermore, Kashmir embodied the religious criteria that were the very reason for Partition; a Hindu maharajah, Hari Singh, was ruling an overwhelmingly Muslim population – according to the 1941 census, 77.1% of the population of Kashmir was Muslim (Kreutzmann 1995: 216). After Partition in August 1947, a stalemate, lasting several months, ensued, as Hari Singh hoped to gain independence for Kashmir. As Pushtu tribesmen invaded Kashmir in October 1947 and threatened to conquer Srinagar, Hari Singh eventually declared accession to India, and Indian troops were flown in. Fighting evolved and continued until a UN-brokered ceasefire came into existence from January 1949. This ceasefire line, since the Simla agreement in 1971 known as the Line of Control, remains the *de facto* border, dividing Indian- and Pakistani-held Kashmir.

After a revolt against the Dogra garrisons in Gilgit and Baltistan, the Gilgit Agency and Baltistan joined Pakistan. It might be instructive to quote the final passage of Dani's "History of Northern Areas of Pakistan: "The blood of the martyrs who died in the battlefield, the material and moral

support that the entire people of this Zone gave for fight for freedom and their voluntary offer to integrate their land with Pakistan, prove the will of the people to cut themselves away from the Maharaja and throw away his decision to join with India. Under this circumstance the Northern Areas of Pakistan came into existence to join freely out of its own accord with Pakistan" (Dani 1989: 401).³²

The crux of the matter is, however, that the area, which the martyrs fought for so heroically, never has become a constitutional part of Pakistan. After the war for independence from Kashmir, practices such as *begar* and heavy taxation were not abolished, but continued by local rulers. In most parts of Gilgit and Baltistan, the mirs or rajahs remained autonomous in internal affairs, and in a number of instances the Gilgit Scouts – very much the symbol of the successful struggle against the Dogra regime – were sent in to protect the mirs against popular protests and resistance movements (Sökefeld 2005).

In the early 1970s, during Bhutto's term as president, the administration of the Northern Areas changed. Taxation, *begar*, and raja rule were abolished, and the Northern Areas now have the status of a federally administered area, divided into five districts, as outlined below.

Table 4.5 Districts of the Northern Areas

Pre-1947	District	Population (1998)		
		Urban	Rural	Total
Gilgit Agency	Gilgit	56,701	186,623	243,324
	Ghizer	10,142	110,076	120,218
	Diamir	16,575	187,016	203,591
Baltistan	Baltistan	26,023	188,825	214,848
	Ganche	12,883	75,483	88,366
Total		122,324	748,023	870,347

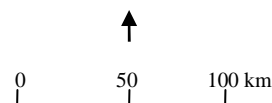
Source: Iftikar 2003 (based on 1998 census data)

Though the area is claimed and controlled by the Pakistani state, changing Pakistani governments have held the position that granting the Northern Areas status of a province within Pakistan would amount to an acceptance of the present status quo in Kashmir. The demands that Pakistani statehood should be extended not just to Gilgit and Baltistan, but to all Kashmir, have been repeated frequently. In 1969 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then foreign minister of Pakistan, wrote that

³² The rising against the Dogra regime and the ensuing request to join Pakistan has, for obvious reasons, been the subject of several studies. See Afridi 1988, Dani 1989, for patriotic accounts, however biased. Afridi was political agent in Baltistan in the period 1964-68, thus providing insights to a period that is only sparsely documented. As to Professor Dani's work, Sökefeld characterizes it as "an official history" (1997a: 72 (footnote)) because it was written at the request of the former Pakistani President Zia Ul Haq.

“... Pakistan is incomplete without Jammu and Kashmir both territorially and ideologically. It would be fatal if Pakistan were to abandon the struggle, and a bad compromise would be tantamount to abandonment; which might, in turn, lead to the collapse of Pakistan” (Bhutto 1969, in Ganguly 2001: 32). This sentiment was echoed 25 years later by his daughter, Benazir: "Kashmir is the cervical vein of Pakistan, and that day is not afar, when it will be a part of this country" (Bose 1997). From another perspective it has been argued that an end to the Kashmir conflict could also remove the joint cause of all ethnic groups in Pakistan, thus eventually questioning the very *raison d'être* of the country³³.

Map 4.1 Northern Areas



³³ As Blom puts it in an analysis of the Pakistani policy on Kashmir: “The possibility of a war with India over Kashmir, which hangs like Damocles’ sword over Pakistanis’ heads, is not only a constitutive part of Pakistan’s official nationalism but also a structural element which helps the institutions of the State to “achieve” a complete control over the society by keeping it in a constant state of mobilization” (Blom 2002: 284).

The implication of the 'Kashmir discourse' is that the Northern Areas are not represented in parliament. The status of Federally Administered Area means that the chief executive authority is vested in the Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Northern Areas, States and Frontier Regions. At the local level, the population of the five districts, which constitute the Northern Areas, elect the 24 member strong Northern Areas Legislative Council. But its mandate is limited, as the chief executive is not answerable to the Northern Areas Council (Cyan and Latif 2003: 6-7).

4.3.4 Road construction and warfare

The major obstacle to control over the Pakistani-held part of Kashmir was from the outset the lack of access to the region. It was only during the summer months, when the mountain passes were open, that Gilgit and Skardu could be reached by motorized transport, via the 4,173 metres Babusar Pass. For the remaining 5-7 months of the year only the airways remained open.

The construction of the 1,300 kilometres long Karakorum Highway, linking the Pakistani capital of Islamabad with Kashgar in north-western China, eliminated this constraint. As opposed to previous transmontane routes, which crossed over mountain passes, most parts of the highway on the Pakistani side run alongside rivers, most notably the Indus. Thereby the ascent is much more gradual, and the climatic and seasonal constraints of high altitude are much less of an issue, especially as the main administrative hubs of the Northern Areas are located at relatively low altitudes (Gilgit at 1,400 metres, and Skardu at 2,100 metres). Furthermore, the decision to construct the highway in the river valleys also testifies to the ability of the Pakistani government and armed forces to control the tribal groups along especially the southern part of the highway. Work on the highway, carried out by Chinese workers and Pakistani soldiers, started in 1964 and was completed in 1978, at approximately the same time as the link road to Skardu also was completed.

Whereas there is no doubt about the validity of the claim of Pakistani leaders that the Karakorum Highway is the tool of economic development in the Northern Areas, it is equally obvious that the motivation behind the road construction in large part stemmed from the pursuit of regional political and military goals (Ispahani 1989: 193). As Kreutzmann concludes: "The Karakorum Highway was built mainly for strategic reasons. It has consequently tightened the bond of the Northern Areas with Pakistan. The power vacuum which was left after the abolishment of hereditary rule has been filled by administrative institutions that have also advanced into the

remote mountain valleys” (Kreutzmann 1993: 28)³⁴.

Especially the completion of the link road through the narrow Indus gorge to Skardu was of importance to the Pakistani armed forces, as this secured all year land access to the troops stationed at the Line of Control, dividing Indian-controlled Ladakh from Pakistani-held Baltistan. Improved access routes on both sides of the Line of Control have if not triggered, then provided the infrastructure necessary to engage in the dispute over the Siachen Glacier, which started in 1984. The dispute stemmed from the inadequate demarcation of the ceasefire line in the 1949 ceasefire agreement, as neither Indian nor Pakistani troops – nor anyone else – were present on the glacier, most of which is located at altitudes above 4,000 metres (Ganguly 2001: 84). The Siachen glacier, 75 kilometres long and covering a total 10,000 km², is the second-biggest glacier outside the Polar regions, it is bitterly cold throughout the year, so artillery shelling can only take place during the summer, and reportedly more troops lose their lives due to frostbite and altitude-related diseases than from each other’s artillery shells (ibid).

It was also the access route through the Indus valley, which was used during the Pakistani intrusion into Kargil in the early summer 1999. Taking the Indian army by surprise, as the attack followed a thaw in Indo-Pakistani relations in early 1999, and because it happened at a time of the year when the high altitude access route was considered inaccessible due to snow, the intruders did at one point threaten the Srinagar-Leh road, and thus the supply route to the Indian troops on the Siachen glacier (Ganguly 2001: 114-133). Using air strikes and the infamous Bofors howitzers the Indian army eventually managed to counter the insurgents and regain some territory. As the Pakistani government failed both to gain international support behind its position and ignite popular support among the Muslim population in Kargil, the troops were eventually withdrawn (ibid).

4.3.5 Regional development

At the local level the Karakorum Highway constitutes the backbone of a road network, which secures links between the Northern Areas and lowland Pakistan throughout the year. Spatial practices are today characterized by immediacy and diversity. A move can, in theory, be initiated at any time of year, unhindered by constraints posed by the physical environment, and the distance from Islamabad to Skardu, prior to Partition a journey of three to four weeks, can be undertaken in 24 hours - not to mention the one hour flight in a Boeing 737.

³⁴ For a more detailed account of the strategies and policy making surrounding the Karakorum Highway, see Ispahani 1989: 193-213).

It should be emphasized that the road network not only secures an immediate all year access to the Pakistani lowlands. It has also resulted in a redirection of existing patterns of spatial mobility within Baltistan. The high mountain passes constituted the traditional routes of exchange between different valleys of Baltistan, thus also giving the spatial practices a distinct seasonal dimension, as the passes, typically at heights above 4.000 meters, could only be crossed for four to five months during summers. This has changed completely due to the construction of a road network along the main rivers. As the most important of these roads are located at altitudes below 3000 meters, and of vital military importance, they are now open all year. An example of these redirected spatial practices is the route from Skardu to Gilgit along the Indus River that was previously considered "...quite impracticable for beasts of burden or horses, and [...] never used, except in winter, when no other road is open for the traveller" (Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh 1890: 169). It is this very route, which since the early 1970s has been the lifeline of the area.

And lifeline it has become. The population, which travellers in the late 19th century characterized as overflowing (Drew 1875), has more than tripled since then. In the late 19th century periodic starvation was reported, and the disruption of traditional supply routes in 1947 did not help matters. In the start of the 1960s, just 2% of the total consumption of staple foods was imported from down-country, but in 1969 Staley found, based on surveys from 1962-66, that an increasing number of villages in the region were becoming deficient in regards to food supplies, and that the region itself was exhibiting a small overall deficiency (Staley 1969: 240). Since then, the overall supply situation has deteriorated, and in 1985 it was estimated that at least one quarter of the grain that was consumed in the region derived from subsidized imports (Whiteman 1985, Kreutzmann 1993: 30, Pilardeaux 1995).

In 1951, relatively shortly after integration in Pakistan, a governmental responsibility for securing food supplies to the Northern Areas was acknowledged: "Help from outside cannot be given except by Government at an exorbitant cost, because unless transport of food grains is subsidized, as the Pakistani Government has been doing, the imported grains are beyond the reach of the common man, for whom they are meant" (Government of Azad Kashmir 1952: 35). In the 1960s the region was supplied by airlifts during the winter months (Talbot 1998: 118), and from 1972 to 1977, as road construction had enabled all year access to parts of the Northern Areas, the Pakistani government organized the distribution of rations of *ata*, wheat flour, for the entire

population of the region³⁵. Since the late 1970s transportation charges have been subsidised by the government in order to secure supplies of stable food.

4.3.6 The nature and role of Islam in the Northern Areas

More so than most areas, which became part of Pakistan, the only commonality that Gilgit-Baltistan shared with the rest of the country was the strong Islamic beliefs of the vast majority of the population. But despite the Islamic *Ummah* as a common ground, it is also within the context of Pakistan as an Islamic republic that the Northern Areas command a special position. Whereas the Shi'is make up some 15 to 20% of Pakistan's population, the Northern Areas is the only part of the country where non-Sunni Islamic groups (Shi'is, Nurbakshis, and Ismailis) constitute a majority, and Baltistan is the only administrative district where there is a Shi'i majority. Among Sunni groups – the most militant of which have made a case for declaring the entire Shi'i minority un-Islamic – this has been used as an argument against granting the Northern Areas the status of a province in its own right³⁶. What has occurred is, according to Rieck, a "...transformation from an isolated and forgotten outpost of Shi'ism in the Indian subcontinent to a stronghold of Shi'i orthodoxy in Pakistan, marked by intensely religious community life and a powerful 'Ulamā class whose influence extends far beyond the Northern Areas" (Rieck 1997b: 221)³⁷. An example of this influence is that all important Shi'i religious schools in Karachi have been founded by 'Ulamā from Baltistan and Nagar (in Gilgit District), and in 1994 around one third of the 1,000 to 1,500 Pakistanis who were studying in Iran came from the Northern Areas (ibid)³⁸.

Whereas Shi'ism is the dominant Islamic sect in Baltistan, most of the population in the Ganche District belong to the Nurbakshiyya sect that today only constitutes a very small minority in the Islamic world. It was the first Islamic sect to be introduced in Baltistan. A Sufi order, aligning its doctrines to Shi'ism, Nurbakshiyya originates from Iran in the late 14th century (Rieck 1997a: 42). Though the identity of the first Islamic preachers in Baltistan is disputed, they came from the

³⁵ As Murphy remarks during her travels in Baltistan in the mid-1970s: "I do deduce poverty when almost everybody in a village is obviously permanently underfed. I have to admit, most reluctantly, that the opening up of this area may be a good thing" (Murphy 1977: 58).

³⁶ See Rieck 1995, for an account of the development of sectarianism in Pakistan.

³⁷ In Kargil, immediately south of the ceasefire line, the Shi'i majority is referred to as "Baltis", while the Sunnis are called "Khache", thereby emphasizing their bonds to Kashmir where the Sunnis constitute a majority (van Beek 1998: 24).

³⁸ It seems as if it is the Sikh conquest of Baltistan in 1840 and the subsequent suppression by non-Muslim rulers that have encouraged a more intense Shi'i religiosity. This was reflected in both a strengthening of local religious practices and the establishing of linkages to religious centres abroad, a practice unknown prior to the Dogra rule (Rieck 1997b: 224-225).

south, from Kashmir (ibid: 43), and the Baltis were converted during the second half of the 15th century. Over time, Baltistan came to constitute a refuge for the Nurbakshis. Whereas their co-religionists in Kashmir were persecuted, and altogether vanished as a distinct minority around 1550, the Nurbakshis in Baltistan were left alone, and they constituted a majority in Baltistan until well into the 19th century. But whereas the Nurbakshi share of the total Balti population has decreased continuously, from 50% to 25% during the last 100 years (Rieck 1997a: 47), the total number of Nurbakshis in Baltistan has increased, from 40,000 in 1911, according to the Census of India (Rieck 1995), to an estimated 70,000 in 1997³⁹. Apart from these territorial ‘blocks’ of Shi’is and Nurbakshis, there are only very few villages where Sunni converts (Ahl-i hadīth) constitute a majority⁴⁰.

The sectarian strife, which has blazed up in different parts of lowland Pakistan since the early 1980s, has also spilled over into the Northern Areas – especially in the Gilgit area where there are equal numbers of Shi’is, Sunnis, and Ismailis (Rieck 1995). Local Sunni ‘Ulamâ’ started to brand the Shi’is as *kâfirs*, pagans, and they demanded their eviction from all higher posts in local administration. In 1988, armed confrontations between Shi’i and Sunni communities from different parts of the Gilgit District erupted, and before the army managed to control the fighting, several hundred had been killed⁴¹. Though the confrontations initially were triggered by disagreements over which day Ramadan was to commence (Aase 1999), the causes were much more deep rooted⁴². Immigration of mainly Sunnis from the Pakistani lowlands and from NWFP to Gilgit has been considerable, thereby upsetting the existing balance between Shi’is, Sunnis, and Ismailis as well as, more importantly, challenging the existing codes for interaction between the three groups. As Aase concludes: “The differentiating principle of *qawm* (descent group) has lost some of its former significance, and religious affiliation has taken over as the dominant signifier between ‘us’ and ‘them’ “(Aase 1999: 77).

³⁹ Among the main Islamic sects, the Nurbakshi-dominated territories are considered ‘game’: “The Nurbakshis are nowadays like a public wasteland (*khālisa arâzī*), whose owner becomes the one who takes possession of it” (Khawar 1985, in Rieck 1997: 56).

⁴⁰ In many Nurbakshi villages there are just one or two Ahl-i hadīth households, and they are treated with the *laissez faire* attitude characteristic of an overwhelming majority. Within families it is not unusual that one brother is Nurbakshi, another Ahl-i hadīth. Especially in the times before food supplies became readily available, hardship could force a Nurbakshi household to send a son to an Ahl-i hadīth *madrassa* where free boarding was provided.

⁴¹ The glow of the conflict stayed around for several years to come. During my first visit to Gilgit, in the summer 1992, 14 Shi’is and Sunnis were killed in ‘tit-for-tat’ incidents before the army stepped in and imposed a week-long curfew.

⁴² The militant conflict between Shi’is and Sunnis can be traced back to the 1970s. An incident during the Shiite *muharram* procession resulted in armed Shi’i and Sunni groups marching towards Gilgit from respectively north and south. The Gilgit Scouts managed to prevent both groups from reaching the town and thus defused the confrontation (Sökefeld 2005).

Tensions between the different groups have never been entirely defused, and the most recent incident of sectarian violence dates back to early 2005 when the most prominent Shiite prayer leader in Gilgit together with his body guards was killed in a ‘terrorist attack’, which resulted in widespread violence, a curfew lasting several weeks, and a temporary closure of the Karakorum Highway. As opposed to previous incidents, the unrest this time also spread to Baltistan where shops and hotels belonging to the Sunni minority were attacked and torched (Dawn 10.01.2005, 14.01.2005).

4.3.7 Urdu and the local languages

Throughout the Northern Areas the past decades have witnessed a drive towards the visibility of the local languages, as well as an increased mastering of Urdu. Whereas Balti remains the dominant spoken language in Baltistan, Urdu is considered the *lingua franca* in domains of power and authority. Accordingly the command of Urdu becomes a prerequisite in the local contest for government jobs. So the incentives for learning Urdu have become obvious⁴³. According to a sociolinguistic survey, carried out in Baltistan in 1992, there was also a widespread interest in learning to read Balti, but also an acceptance that command of other languages was a prerequisite for advancement and better jobs (Backstrom 1992)⁴⁴.

Table 4.6 Development in literacy ratios¹ – Pakistan and Northern Areas

Literacy rates	Total		Male		Female	
	N.A.	Pakistan	N.A.	Pakistan	N.A.	Pakistan
1981	14	26	17	35	3	16
1998	33	43	40	55	25	32

Source: Iftikar 2003: 17 (based on census data from 1981 and 1998).

1) A person who can read a newspaper and write a simple letter in any language is treated as literate, and the literacy ratio is the percentage of literate persons among the population of 10 years and above.

Table 4.6 demonstrates how literacy rates in the Northern Areas have risen in the inter-censal period 1981 to 1998, and how this compares with similar increases in Pakistan as such. Whereas

⁴³ As Scott puts it at a more general level: “One can hardly imagine a more effective formula for immediately devaluing local knowledge and privileging all those who had mastered the official linguistic code” (Scott 1998: 72).

⁴⁴ Whereas Backstrom is optimistic as regards the viability of Balti, however supplemented with increasing numbers of Urdu and English words, Abbas Kazmi, a local scholar, is less optimistic. Liking Balti to an ‘astray animal’ Kazmi deplores the fact that Balti has lost its links to both Ladakhi and Tibetan and has been “left at the mercy of other languages and literatures which are stronger in quantity and vocabulary” (Kazmi 1996: 145). But local interest is picking up, and there is local interest in “rediscovering” the written Balti language. In the central bazaars of Skardu, until recently completely dominated by Arabic and English letters, signboards in Balti, written in Tibetan script, have become increasingly popular since 1999 (Magnusson 2001).

the increase in literacy ratios all over has been much more rapid in the Northern Areas than in Pakistan as a whole, it is especially female literacy that has increased dramatically – this reflecting a general situation where the availability of educational facilities for girls has become much more widespread, in terms of both primary schools and access to open university facilities.

Furthermore, those who are literate are likely to be Urdu-literates. In the Northern Areas, none of the indigenous languages are used as medium of instruction, and there are neither literacy materials nor textbooks in these languages. So in government schools the medium of instruction is Urdu, supplemented by the use of the students' first language for explanations and general communication (Harlech-Jones et al 2005: 562). Whereas government schools constitute 79% of all schools in the Northern Areas, the number of private schools, with English as the medium of instruction, has risen rapidly since the early 1990s (ibid: 560). When parents send their children to English medium schools, they do so for reasons which Harlech-Jones describes as strictly instrumental, as they believe that it will improve their children's chances of recruitment to the civil service and the army (ibid: 565).

Interestingly, the study concludes that in the Northern Areas Urdu is perceived as so pervasive as a *lingua franca* that many parents feel that their children do not need to spend time and effort on learning it at school, because they will learn it anyway (ibid: 563). There might altogether not be a better way to emphasize that Urdu would seem to have become the language of Pakistan, when those who have been territorialised have taken to it to such an extent that they do not feel the need to learn it.

4.4 Revisiting the territorialisation process

The intent of this chapter has been to establish the larger picture – partly by presenting the forces which attempt to create and/or undo the Pakistani state, and partly by sketching how the Northern Areas are becoming part of Pakistan.

Overall one dimension of the larger picture is one of increasing dependency of the Northern Areas on food supplies from lowland Pakistan. The Karakorum Highway and the link road down the Indus Gorge to Skardu have truly emerged as lifelines, and short-term closures of the highway, due to landslides or political agitation, have been seen to result in rather immediate shortages in the bazaars of Gilgit and Skardu. So the subsistence of the mountain population is conditioned by the access to resources from the lowlands. However, for the first time in 'history' – the relatively short time span that has been documented – there are now no periods of starvation

and famine (Kreutzmann 1995: 222).

In summary, and leaning on Messerschmidt's findings from a study of gateway-hinterland relations in Nepal (Messerschmidt 1995: 113-114), three broad types of change can be identified in the Northern Areas: A shift from a previous network of footpaths to a situation characterized by the recent and rapid development of motor roads, where spatial mobility practices are characterised by immediacy, speed and diversity, unhindered by seasonal constraints; from an isolated and traditional rural society to one impacted by extensive bureaucratization, with Urdu as the medium of instruction; from a previously reciprocal, exchange-based local economy to a more centrally controlled redistributive economy, with local towns emerging as central places offering opportunities for both employment and trade.

Towards the end of this discussion of the Pakistani state in its capacity as a territorialising regime, it might also be useful to emphasize how the territorialisation of the Northern Areas would seem to have become a 'double move'. The different infrastructural techniques or trans-local institutions used by the Pakistani government have been discussed above, and the next chapter will analyse how the local population make use of them. But in order to establish a complete picture of the territorialisation process, it must also be emphasized how the Northern Areas are used by the Pakistani government in order to territorialise Pakistan. Controlling the Northern Areas and establishing trans-local institutions without granting the territory status of a province, and its residents status of Pakistani citizens, reflects a strategy, which must be seen in the light of the conflict over Kashmir – or rather, the necessity of keeping the conflict alive as a joint project, which serves to unite the different regions of Pakistan. Granting constitutional rights to the Northern Areas could be seen as tantamount to an acceptance of the territorial status quo in Kashmir – as proposed by Nehru as early as 1956 (Ganguly 2001: 25). This would surrender the claim, however unrealistic, on the rest of Kashmir, and by accepting that a "...Muslim majority [state] can remain part of India, then the *raison d'être* of Pakistan disappears", as Bhutto wrote in 1969 (in Ganguly 2001: 32).

In his study of the changing modes of domination in the Northern Areas, Sökefeld argues that "...instead of locating a uni- or multilinear transition from colonialism to the postcolonial, we discover only transitions between specific relations and modes of domination and subalternity in the history of the Northern Areas" (Sökefeld 2005: 940). Sökefeld concludes that the Pakistani domination of the Northern Areas had considerable legitimacy in and after 1947, but in response to the unwillingness of Pakistani government to accept the Northern Areas as an integrated part of Pakistan, "[a] nation of the Northern Areas was in the process of being imagined" (ibid).

Alternative imaginings have been based on an increasing awareness of the cultural heritage shared by Baltistan and Ladakh as a basis for a new territorial entity, cutting across the Line of Control⁴⁵.

It is beyond the scope of this study to take the analysis of this ‘awareness’ any further, but it does seem pertinent to refer to these manifestations of the doubts, which residents of the Northern Areas harbour concerning the motivation and direction of the territorialisation process.

⁴⁵ The banning of ‘K2’, the local weekly published from Islamabad, in October 2000 should be seen in the light of this increased awareness. The newspaper had, according to the ruling of the Skardu magistrate, been “...promoting anti-Pakistan feelings and advocating curtailment of territories within the boundaries of the state” (Dawn 27/10 2000). This might seem ironic as the core of the initial problem had been, and still is, the refusal of the Pakistani state to include the Northern Areas within its boundaries.

Chapter five

Livelihoods in Thalay

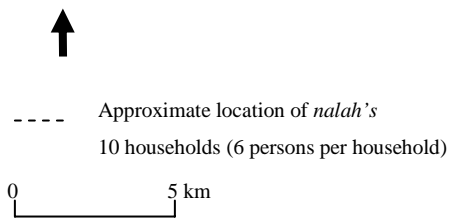
5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to establish an understanding of how livelihoods in Thalay are sustained at village and household level. In doing this, I want to empirically test the relevance of integrating vertical and horizontal perspectives in the analysis of mountain livelihoods. This aim is reflected in the organisation of the chapter, which is divided into respectively a vertical section, a horizontal section, and finally a discussion of how the data from Thalay relate to other findings from Baltistan.

The data presented in this chapter are largely based on the survey carried out in Thalay in the winters of 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, supplemented with summaries of a limited number of interviews, and supported by data from fieldwork carried out in the valley in 1995. Whereas most of the data presented derive from the survey carried out at household level, I have chosen to organise and present them at village level, thereby also aiming to document the diversity characterising the villages of Thalay.

The vertical section comprises an analysis of strategies and practices whereby livelihoods in Thalay are organised around utilisation of the local resource base, at village and household level.

Map 5.1 Thalay



Source: Based on US Army Map 1:250,000, NI 43-3

This includes analysis of traditional practices of resource utilisation where household-based agro-pastoral practices are combined with village-controlled common property resources. The horizontal section constitutes, at least at the outset, a less well-defined category, as the improved means of transportation and communication have resulted in a much greater awareness of and exposure to a diverse range of knowledge systems and cultural practices from outside the valley. While not disregarding the importance and impact of such processes and their potential impact on local livelihoods, their proper interpretation also calls for a different kind of analysis, which is beyond the scope of the present study. In the present analysis I will focus on how local livelihood strategies incorporate the three dimensions of the 'Pakistani project', which were identified in the previous chapter. These are the armed forces, education, and government service.

5.1 Situating Thalay

Thalay Valley is located in the south-eastern part of Baltistan. It is a side valley to the Khapulu Valley, which is drained by the River Shyok, a tributary to the Indus. The valley is demarcated to the south between the villages of Upper and Lower Burdas, the specific demarcation marked by the burying of burned wood, which has resulted in a permanent blackening of the soil on the boundary line. From the lowest part of the valley, at 2,500m above sea level (a.s.l.), it is a gradual climb in a north-north-western direction to *Thalay lah*, a pass at 4,576m a.s.l. Despite the relatively high altitude, the pass is considered easily negotiable, and before the construction of a road network it constituted the traditional access route between the two rajah states of Khapulu and Shigar. The construction of a link road through Thalay, which since 1985 has connected the valley to the Skardu-Khapulu road, has meant that mobility practices of the local population have changed, and Skardu – 100 kilometres or four hours away – has become the central place in terms of communication and commercial activities as well as the gateway to the Karakorum Highway and lowland Pakistan. The traditional route is today largely frequented by yaks and the occasional trekker.

5.1.1 Thalaypa

The population of Thalay is in Balti known as *Thalaypa* – *pa* being the Balti word for people. Like most of the population in Ganche District, the vast majority of *Thalaypa* are Nurbakhshis.

In Thalay, demographic development over the past 50 years reflects the picture from rural Ganche. The population increase in the first years after Partition was negligible. A population of 2357 in 1951 had increased by less than 100 in 1961 (in Afridi 1988), an increase of less than

0.5% annually. This was followed by a rapid growth in the period 1961-81, as the population in Thalay increased by more than 3% annually, in 1981 totalling 4059 - a development that very much reflects the overall picture in Baltistan (Government of Pakistan 1984). But in the period 1981-98, the growth rate has, at 0.8% annually, been rather modest, thus similar to the rest of Ganche, with a total population of 4,621 in 1998 (Government of Pakistan 2001b). This is significantly different from the demographic development in the Baltistan District where population growth has been experienced in both the urban township of Skardu and in Shigar where farmland still is plentiful.⁴⁶

Table 5.1 Population development 1951-1998¹

	Baltistan	Ganche	Thalay	Annual increase (%)
1951	106,971	x	2,357	
1961	132,010	x	2,454	0.4
1981	150,446	73,222	4,059	3.2
1998	214,848	88,366	4,621	0.8

Source: Afridi 1988, Government of Pakistan 1984, 2001a, 2001b.

1) Ganche District was parcelled out from Baltistan District in 1974. Accordingly census figures for Baltistan from 1961 should not be compared with figures from 1981 and 1998.

As health facilities in the intervening period have improved considerably, and family planning programmes have made little headway in these strictly Muslim communities – as confirmed by increasing household sizes during the past years (AKRSP 2000) – a higher population growth rate could have been expected in both Thalay and in Ganche at large. It is a reasonable expectation – given the scarcity of farmland – that emigration generally has contained population growth.⁴⁷

In Thalay the past has been characterised by very limited residential mobility, mostly within the parameters of the valley and largely as a consequence of marriages involving households in different villages. In the village of Khasurmik, comprising 32 households, all *tsharma*'s, heads of households, are born in the village. So are the majority of women who are married into the households, and the rest, but one, come from other villages in Thalay. Altogether only one adult

⁴⁶ This will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

⁴⁷ It is in the nearby Kharmang Valley that land scarcity is highest (Magrath 1986), and the incentives for finding alternative means of livelihood thus become most pressing. According to a survey on the residential status of families originating from the village of Puri in Kharmang, almost half of all *Puripa*, or just over 1800 people, were in 1999 living outside Kharmang. Close to 70% of all those who had moved away had settled in Skardu, and another 20% were living down country, two thirds of these in Karachi (AKRSP 1999). This survey is unfortunately the only one of its kind, and it is by no means representative for Baltistan, but should rather be taken to illustrate partly the extreme situation where land scarcity necessitates alternative livelihood strategies, partly the option of moving to the nearest town instead of leaving the mountains altogether.

person of the village originates from outside the valley, namely from the neighbouring valley of Hushey (Jensen 1997)⁴⁸. This picture is recognizable, though not quite as pronounced, throughout the valley.

5.1.2 Residential pattern

A total of 13 villages are located on the banks of the River Thalay in the southernmost part of the valley, at altitudes between 2,450m and 3,150m - an altitudinal variation which, while seemingly modest, has a bearing on the length of the farming season at each end of the valley as well as the variety of crops that can be grown. The villagers themselves divide the valley into respectively *youl* and *broq*. The *youl* is the permanently inhabited, southern part of the valley encompassing all the villages, whereas the *broq* is the northernmost part where there are only summer settlements. Furthermore, all villages of the valley command specific tracts of farmland in Thalay *broq*⁴⁹, owned and farmed by individual households.



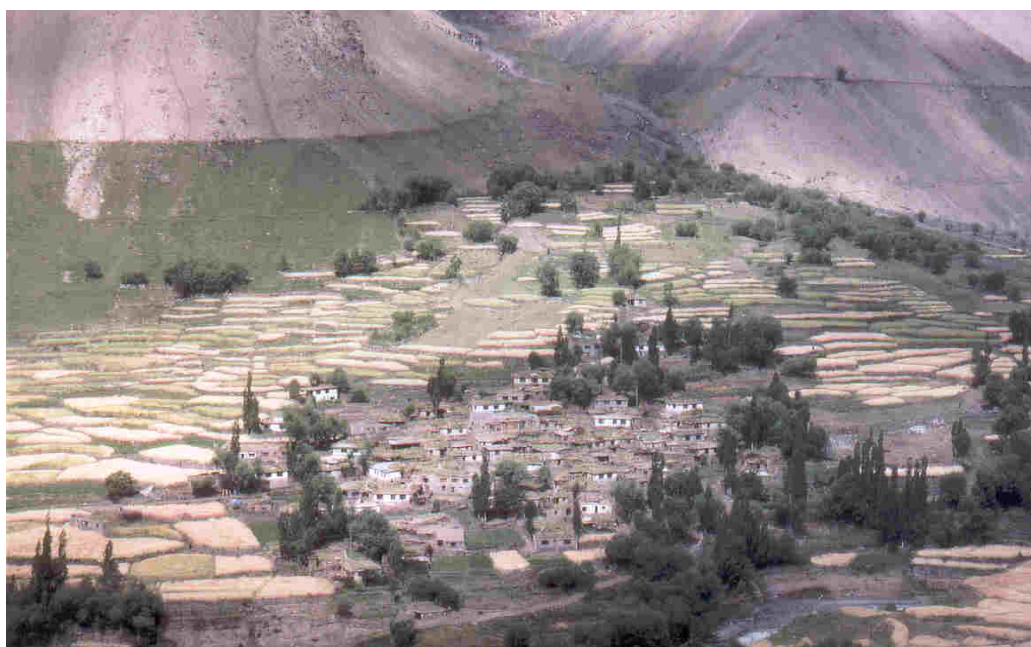
Thalay broq (at an altitude of approx. 3,200 meters) where all villages in Thalay hold land entitlements (August 1998)

All villages are located on alluvial fans at the mouth of *nalahs*, narrow and steep side canyons that are adjacent to the main valley. The fans, consisting of debris that has been produced through

⁴⁸ This pattern is confirmed by Ursula Sagaster who carried out an enquiry into marital practices of 43 local women in the village of Kandey in the nearby valley of Hushey. All the women, except for one who came from the neighbouring village of Hushey, were born in Kandey (Sagaster 1995).

⁴⁹ The term *broqpa* – literally “people from wild places” – is used by Baltis as a term for strangers, usually with specific reference to people from Gilgit. In Thalay, the village of Broqpa is thus inhabited by settlers, who originated from Gilgit.

erosive processes at high altitudes, have been turned into terraced fields. Glacial melt water is transported through the *nalahs*, and by way of extensive channel systems it is utilized for gravity irrigation of the village fields. So the typical picture of a village in Thalay is a tight cluster of homesteads in the midst of terraced fields. Each *nalah* also gives access to pastures that are located at high altitudes, usually above 4,000 meters.. These are jointly managed and utilized by the village households, and livestock is grazed here during the summer. All the villages are thus situated according to an identical pattern that reflects the agro-ecological imperatives of the region. Baltistan, as well as the entire Northern Areas, has been characterized as a mountain desert due to the very low rate of precipitation, apart from snow at high altitudes, which makes all crop cultivation dependent on access to glacial melt water (Whiteman 1985, MacDonald 1994, Schmidt 2000).



The village of Daltir, located at an altitude of 2,980 meters. The distinct demarcation of the green pasture shows where the upper irrigation channel is running (August 1998).

Within the valley each village commands the usage of a specified tract of agro-ecological zones comprising both individually owned farmland and common property resources. The individual farming practices depend on access to melt water for irrigation purposes, as well as high altitude pastures for grazing animals and gathering firewood. Control over water resources and pastures rests with the village, so it is through its ownership of farmland in the village that the individual household asserts its claim to the environmental entitlements – mainly irrigation water and access to pastures – that are essential in order to sustain agricultural practices (Emerson 1990, MacDonald 1994). This practice, whereby household-based activities are integrated with and

dependent on the village-controlled natural resource base, has been considered a defining principle behind human existence in Baltistan, as Emerson concludes: “There are no people in Baltistan today living apart from these islands of intense irrigation agriculture” (Emerson 1990: 104). The “corporate village” (Emerson’s term) is seen as the smallest effective unit – an understanding shared by Jettmar: “The basic units of the Balti population were residential rather than kinship groups: i.e. neighbours, united by shared economic and ritual tasks during festivals and domestic rites of the life cycle” (Jettmar 1989: 81).

5.2 Vertical section

Verticality does in this context refer to the altitudinally defined variations in the topography within Thalay, as demonstrated on map 5.1. Altitude serves to diversify the natural resource potential in the valley – as expressed in a number of different vegetation zones – and altitude also determines the length of the agricultural season as well as the cropping regime characteristic of different parts of the valley.

5.2.1 Natural resource base

In the following I will shortly present and discuss the most important aspects of the natural resource base. These are irrigation water, pastures and farmland.

Irrigation water

Crop cultivation in Thalay occurs at altitudes between 2,500 and 3,200 meters, but it depends fully on a supply of melt water from elevations above 4,000 meters. Whereas supply during the summer normally is relatively stable and plentiful, stemming from ice melt, the supply in spring derives largely from snow melt, thus depending on snowfall during the previous winter. Likewise, winter snowfall on the farmlands in the *youl* determines the level of soil water saturation – and thus when there is a need to initiate irrigation in the spring.

As it was the case all over Baltistan, the water rights of each village were laid down in 1902 and 1914 by officials of the Dogra regime (Schmidt 2000: 140). Accordingly the water from each water-bearing *nalah* became the entitlement of a specific village or divided between two or more villages according to the size of each village. Though water entitlements in Thalay remain governed by these regulations, they are not uncontested, as demonstrated in the text box below.

Distribution of water is achieved through the construction of feeder channels that divert water

from the glacial streams in the *nalahs*, often located several hundred vertical meters above the areas where the water is to be utilised. From the feeder channels ditches are dug, which connect one or more fields with the channels. These ditches can be blocked or opened at will. At village level, the water is distributed according to the acreages of farm land, which each household commands. Each field is irrigated approx. once every 10 to 14 days.

Text box 5.1

A conflict over water resources, involving several villages in Thalay, evolved in 1997-98. Four villages – Chundo, Gagoderik, Tassu, and Hadangus – wanted to divert water from the *nalah* above the village of Yearkhor, one of the larger villages in Thalay. Here water is plentiful during the summer, but not so, according to the *Yearkhorpa*, during spring. Together with Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), the four villages had developed plans to dynamite a channel through the mountain side and divert the water into a dry *nalah* controlled by the four villages. When the conflict evolved, AKRSP withdrew its technical support. Eventually, as the mediation attempts of a *jirga* failed, the matter was brought before the district court in Skardu. The verdict favoured the four villages, but an appeal was brought forward by the villagers from Yearkhor. By the summer 2004, the matter remained unresolved, and work on the channel had not been initiated.

According to the AKRSP regional programme manager in Skardu, conflicts over water resources are becoming increasingly common, and they are also often difficult to resolve, as the original documents only can be found in archives in Srinagar in Indian controlled-Kashmir. It is also becoming increasingly common to refer these legal matters to the court in Skardu rather than respecting the verdict of the traditional, religious *jirga*. As the AKRSP manager put it: “When worldly things are in danger, the religious are very few”.

(Annexe 1, # 33)

Pastures

Pasture areas are located in the *nalahs*, at altitudes above 3,500 metres. The village(s) which hold the right to water resources from a *nalah* also hold the usufructuary rights to the pasture lands of the particular *nalah*.

Especially in the upper part of Thalay, the pastures are also a source of firewood – mainly shrubs and branches of a local variety of rose hip. But due to signs of decreasing firewood resources over the past 10 to 15 years, the village elders have decided to restrict the gathering of firewood, and each household is permitted to gather a limited number of loads, depending on the size of the household.

Tree resources

As it is the case in most parts of Baltistan, there are very limited wood resources in Thalay. In the lower part of the valley, apricot is the dominant tree, though numbers are not as high as in other parts of the Khapulu Valley, where the average household owns 30 to 40 trees (Magrath 1986). Apart from apricots, the most popular tree is poplar, which especially is found on the edge of irrigation channels and in small, irrigated plots. Tall, narrow, and fast-growing trees, the shadow effects of poplars are minimal, the timber is very well suited for construction works, and the smaller branches can be cut off and used for animal feed.

The altitudinal limit for apricot trees is reached in mid-Thalay, north of Broqpa, and upper Thalay is altogether much more barren. The planting of poplars in small, fenced plots near the villages and on irrigated mountain slopes has only been initiated in recent years in partnerships between village organisations and the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme.

Farmland

All farmland in Thalay derive from alluvial deposits of debris, which have been converted into terraced fields through a sorting of material according to particle size. The bottom layer consists of stones and boulders, whereas the upper soil layer exhibits a much finer soil texture, frequently with a depth of no more than 0.5 metres. With soils being this shallow, soil nutrients are only added through manuring or by applying chemical fertilisers.

The typical land holding consists of a relatively high number of very small plots, easily 20-40, and they are typically scattered over the entire land base commanded by the village. The land distribution, which is shown at village level in table 5.2, comprises terraced fields in Thalay, located both in the *youl* and the *broq*. There are no major landlords in Thalay, and no individual farmer owns more than 10% of the farmland in his village. There are nevertheless considerable differences to be found, both between villages in the valley and at the intra-village level.

When comparing respectively the upper and lower deciles of households within each village, a relatively coherent picture emerges. The 10% of households, which are the biggest landowners, own approximately 20% of the farmland in the villages, while the lowest decile owns less than 5% of the farmland. Only a very small number of households – three out of all households covered by the survey – are entirely landless.

Table 5.2 Distribution of farmland in Thalay

	Cultivated area ⁵⁰ (kanals) ¹			Farmland/ capita (kanals)	Land distribution	
	biggest	Smallest	Average		Upper 10%	Lower 10%
Khasurmik	22	6	12.8	1.78	17.2	4.9
Ludas	21	4	13.7	2.05	x ²	x ²
Daltir	32	2	14.6	2.15	19.5	3.3
Baltoro	36	2	12.3	1.67	23.7	2.6
Broqpa	20	2	8.7	1.44	24.3	3.6
Tagary	29	3	13.2	1.94	17.4	3.5
Yearkhor	47	0	11.0	1.62	15.9	3.0
Chundo	60	6	19.0	2.7	25.9	3.7
Gagoderik	41	4	16.8	2.34	20.3	3.1
Hadangus	29	0	10.9	1.65	20.2	2.0
Padangus	30	2	11.0	1.76	20.4	4.9
Burdas	29	4	13.1	2.10	17.5	3.5

Source: Survey of 491 households, carried out 1998-2000.

1) 1 kanal equals 0.05 ha.

2) The number of households surveyed in Ludas (six) was too small.

Overall the most prevalent characteristic of land tenure in Thalay is the continuing process of land fragmentation. The Islamic system of partible inheritance means that land is divided equally between all sons⁵¹. Accordingly, an increasing number of households own landholdings that are ever smaller, and at the same time the population growth results in a declining man-land ratio. For example, while there in the village of Khasurmik was 2.15 kanal of farmland per consumer unit in 1995 (Jensen 1997: 56), the figure had dropped to 1.78 in 2000 – and the number of households in the village had increased by four, to 32.

Another tendency, which would seem to be linked to land fragmentation and population growth, is the conversion of farmland into residential space, as homesteads increasingly are built outside the village clusters. New houses, often constructed in cement, are built on demarcated plots⁵². According to anecdotal evidence, this should be ascribed to increased affluence. If different family units within a household in the old days did not get along, they would build a wall, dividing the homestead. Now they build new houses. However, it should be added that the new

⁵⁰ Whereas the kanal constitutes the land measurement unit in Pakistan, equal to 0.05 hectare, one *kanal* in Baltistan expresses the land unit requiring ten kg of sowing seeds. As sowing rates increase with altitude, the actual acreage of a *kanal* will decrease correspondingly.

⁵¹ In fact Islamic law states that daughters should be given shares half the size of those given to sons. But in practice – in Thalay as well as in other parts of the Islamic world – daughters will usually renounce their claims.

⁵² In his expedition through Baltistan, de Filippi also observed this linkage between the availability of arable land and the residential pattern: “In some villages, a little better provided with arable land, the buildings may be farther apart and better constructed. But where the soil is scarce, the houses are squeezed in anyhow, back to back, sometimes almost on top of each other, at the expense of all form, comeliness or elbow-room” (de Filippi 1932: 86).

houses, like the older ones, are built in two stories, with the ground floor for livestock, and the upper storey for the household.

5.2.2 Agro-pastoral strategies

“They spend all summer getting ready for the winter”. This remark, made in 1995 by the then regional manager of AKRSP in Baltistan before I embarked on my first fieldwork in Thalay, has stuck with me ever since. A short summer is spent utilizing the production zones of the valley in such ways that both the human population and the livestock are able to survive the winter.

As it has been the case all over Northern Pakistan, agro-pastoral strategies are based on optimising the linkages between crop cultivation and livestock management in the limited time space that is available for agricultural production. As Whiteman states in an agronomic analysis of the Northern Areas, carried out in the mid-1980s: “Farmers compromise on yields per crop to maximum yield per most limiting factor, which is generally land, and opt for a second crop” (Whiteman 1985: 11).

In Thalay where scarcity of farmland makes fallowing impossible, soil fertility would traditionally depend mainly on the application of animal manure, stored during winter stabling or collected in the *nalahs*. Likewise, ploughing and threshing operations depend on the availability of animals as traction power. On the other hand, the number of livestock, which a household can keep, is conditioned by the availability of fodder for winter feeding. Whereas the animals are grazed during the summers on collectively managed pastures, winter feeding is the responsibility of the individual farmer, thus effectively checking possible over-exploitation and degradation of the pastures⁵³. This also means that the crop composition is conditioned by the necessity of producing enough fodder for the animals. For example, potatoes are a highly valued cash crop, but the crop residues from potatoes cannot be utilised for animal fodder.

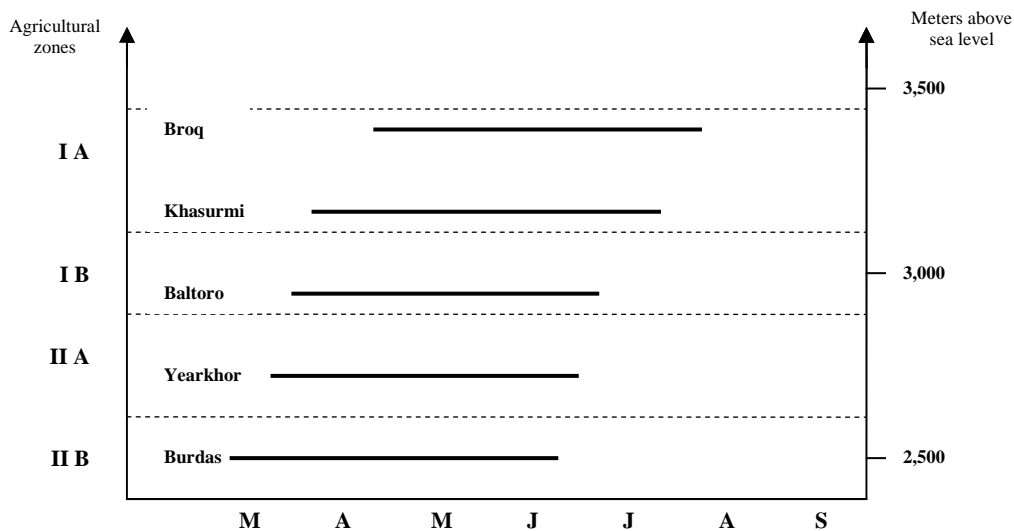
⁵³ This aspect of resource control is largely identical with the alp rights of 1517, referred to by Netting: “No one is permitted to send more cows to the alps than he can winter” (Netting 1981: 61). And Netting uses this as a counter argument against Hardin (1968), who advocates the ‘tragedy of the commons’ precisely on the basis of lacking control mechanisms: “At one stroke this simple rule overturns the economic logic of the ‘tragedy of the commons’ in which the rational herdsman gains by using more of a communal good, to the eventual detriment of the group and the environment” (ibid).

Seasonality

Local seasonality is defined by altitude. Throughout Thalay farming operations are initiated as soon as the snow has melted – at times even before, as the dates when sowing has to be completed, have been laid down for generations. But the altitudinal constraint also implies that farming operations are ‘delayed’ as one moves up through the valley, as illustrated in figure 5.1.

So the farming season starts one month later in Khasurmik, the uppermost, northernmost village, than in Burdas in the south of the valley. In other words, the farming season is staggered, so that it does not peak at the same time throughout the valley. Accordingly, labour becomes less of a potential bottleneck in agricultural production, and there is scope for exchanges of labour between households residing in different villages, a scope that is accentuated by the marital bonds linking families in different villages. Likewise, households in different villages can be seen sharing draught animals, especially during the harvest season. In the village of Khasurmik, 24 out

Fig. 5.1 Growing season for barley in Thalay



Source: Farmers in Thalay 1995

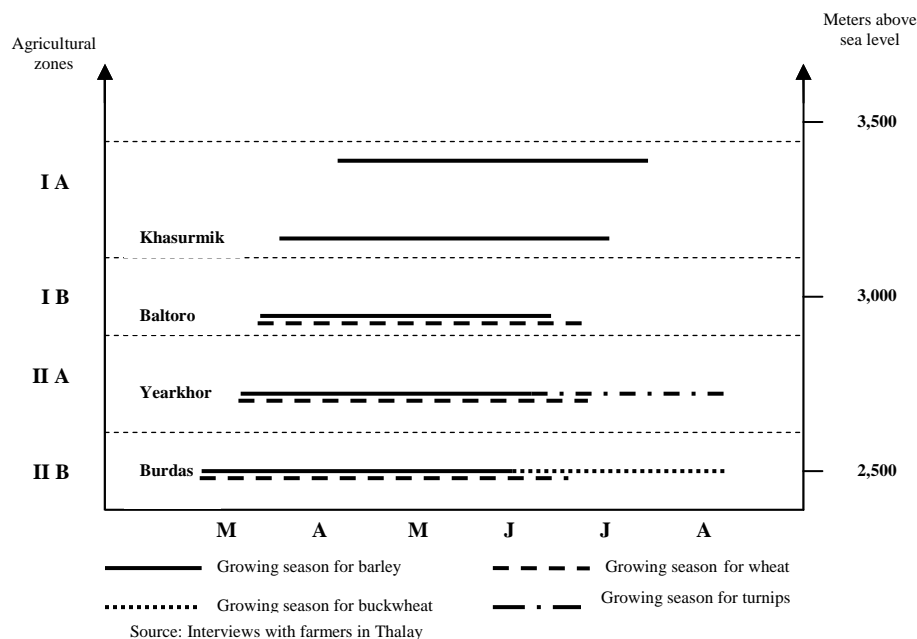
of 28 households were in 1995 involved in such reciprocal exchanges (Jensen 1997: 63), mainly during the harvest season when a number of different tasks need to be carried out simultaneously.

Crop selection

The traditional objective of agricultural production can be described as an attempt to utilize farmland fully within the time space allowed by the climatological regime. The practical implications of this are reflected in the choice of subsistence crop. Barley is the traditional crop, whereas wheat has become the most favoured food staple. But the growing season of barley is

shorter than that of wheat, thus enabling the farmers in most of Thalay to grow a second crop before the onset of winter. Wheat is ‘expensive’ in terms of land, as wheat fields will remain bare for the remaining part of the growing season, as demonstrated in figure 5.2 below. So whereas wheat has become the most popular staple food in Thalay, this is not reflected in local farming strategies. Wheat is only grown on 15 to 20% of the farmland. Furthermore, wheat imported from the Punjab is readily available from Skardu and from government-controlled stores just south of Thalay.

Fig. 5.2 Growing season for 1st and 2nd crops in Thalay



In Thalay, the decision to grow a second crop – in the busiest time of the year – also reflects the imperatives driving the agro-pastoral system, namely to produce in such a way that both human and livestock population can be sustained. Apart from a limited number of fields planted with buckwheat and maize in the southern part of the valley, the second crop almost exclusively consists of *mulluh*, a local variety of turnip. Most of the crop is dried immediately after harvest and used for animal feed in winter.

The cultivation of potatoes is the only significant change to land use practices in Thalay. The crop has according to local farmers been introduced within the last 40 years, and it is the only crop that has not got a Balti name – the Urdu word, *alu*, always being used. Generally, the agro-ecological potential for cultivation of potatoes is good throughout the valley, but especially so in

upper Thalay⁵⁴. Several farmers pointed to the relatively high yields as the advantage of potato production, whereas the draw back was that crop residues could not be used as animal fodder (Jensen 1997: 44). Being quite demanding in regard to both soil depth and soil fertility, potatoes were in 2000 typically grown on approximately 10% of a land holding. However, more recent data suggest that production has increased significantly over the past five years, so that potatoes by 2005 were grown on 30% of all farmland (AKRSP 2005).

Agricultural zonation

In order to organise the data on agricultural production presented above and highlight the vertically defined diversity within the valley, I have undertaken an agricultural zonation of Thalay (based on Jensen 1997: 41-42, with minor modifications):

- Ia: (3,050-3,400m) This is the northernmost part of the valley, where only one crop can be grown. Barley is the dominant crop, but potatoes are also grown successfully. No fruit trees thrive in this zone, but poplars and willows are grown in small plots.
- Ib: (2,800-3,050m) Still only one annual crop is cultivable, but as opposed to zone 1a, wheat can also be grown. Barley does, however, remain the most commonly cultivated crop. Besides poplars and willows, apricots and walnuts are grown.
- IIb (2,600-2,800m) A second crop can be grown successfully upon the harvest of barley, whereas no second crop is sown after the harvest of wheat. In this zone the second crop is *mulluh*. Apricot trees are plentiful.
- IIb: (2,450-2,600m) Buckwheat and maize are grown as second crops after barley – maize only for animal fodder as the crop does not mature. Wheat is more popular than further up the valley, but barley still dominates. Besides apricots, other fruit trees include apples, pears and plums.

5.2.3 Livestock practices

The cross-breeding between yaks and cattle, locally known as *dzos* and *dzomos*, constitute the

⁵⁴ After the completion of the Karakorum Highway in the mid-1980s, the production of potatoes for urban markets in lowland Pakistan has taken off in many parts of the Northern Areas.

backbone of animal husbandry⁵⁵. Known from other parts of the Himalayan region as ‘hybrid husbandry’ (Bishop 1989), the strategy combines the robustness at high altitudes and steep slopes, which characterizes the yak, and the qualities of the cattle, which are generally much easier to handle, but also more ‘fragile’, not coping as well with neither steep slopes nor excessive cold.

Dzos are utilized for traction purposes – for ploughing the fields in spring, and for threshing the harvested crop. *Dzomos*, the female offspring, are mainly kept for the production of *mar*, the local butter that is used for *sabas chai*, salt tea with butter. *Mar* is also one of the traditional commodities of the valley. In “premonetarian times” *mar* also constituted a savings, which could be stored in the ground for years, and bartered away in times of hardship (Magrath 1986: 19). Now it is a highly popular commodity in Skardu, and especially in upper Thalay the sale of *mar* is an important source of income.

The number of *dzos* is closely balanced with the agricultural tasks they are used for, and at village level animals are pooled for threshing purposes, with three to four households sharing draught animals. Likewise, some farmers from Thalay share ownership of *dzo*’s with farmers in Dhagoni, a cluster of villages just south of Thalay. As there are different agricultural peak periods due to the altitudinal variation, the same *dzo* can be used in different villages. The keeping of *dzomos* is a much more individualistic venture, as it provides an income. Accordingly all farmers are interested in acquiring as many *dzomos* as they are able to feed during the winter. In the village of Khasurmik, where I carried out a livestock census in 1995, all 28 households owned *dzomos*, at an average of three per household. Only 22 households owned *dzos*, at an average of 1.6 per household (Jensen 1997: 61).

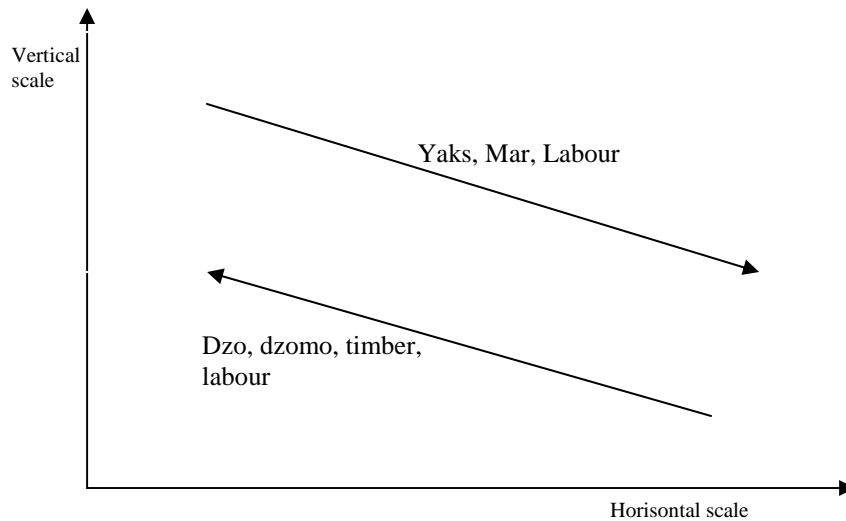
5.2.4 Exchange and trade

In the figures 5.3 and 5.4, the main characteristics of intra-valley exchange as well as trade relations between Thalay and the outside are sketched. It is useful to view the intra-valley exchanges in relation to the ecological diversity within Thalay. The scarcity of trees in the upper part of the valley has resulted in a demand for timber, both from lower Thalay and from outside the valley (as well as the establishment of poplar plantations on irrigated slopes in upper Thalay,

⁵⁵ Hybrid husbandry is conditioned by both ecological conditions and cultural links. The practice is known throughout Tibetan-influenced parts of Himalaya, but not in similar environments without Tibetan influence. Kreutzmann notes that the administrative border of Baltistan with the Gilgit District roughly separates the areas where crossbreeding takes place from those where it does not, and this roughly corresponds with the distribution of ethnic groups (Kreutzmann 1986: 103)

initiated under the auspices of AKRSP). As regards livestock, the villagers in upper Thalay have access to more pasture lands, and they thus produce more of the livestock species that can roam on steep slopes – e.g. yaks and yakmos – whereas the more fragile species, especially cows, need to be kept in the *youl* all year, thus depending much more on fodder.

Fig. 5.3 **Relations of intra-valley exchange in Thalay**



Source: Informants in Thalay 1999.

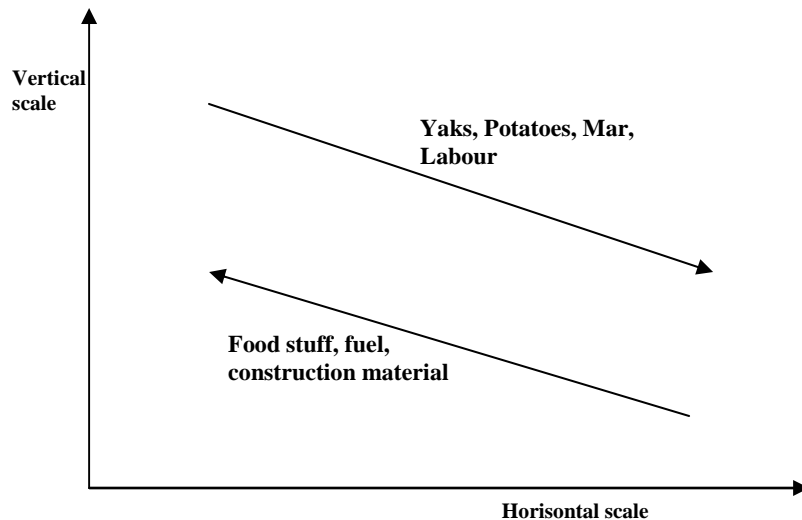
The circulation of labour within the valley is linked to both the exchanges of labour between households in different villages, and the different types of work available locally, e.g. casual labour and different types of construction works.

Apart from the yaks, which are sold to villages located in lower parts of the Khapulu main valley, all commerce takes place with Skardu as the central place. The seasonal traffic to Shigar has ceased, and the bartering across Thalay Lah, where dairy products from upper Thalay used to be exchanged for Shigari apricots, has stopped. Farm produce from Thalay, mainly *mar* and potatoes, is now sold in the bazaar in Skardu, or bought by traders who come to Thalay⁵⁶. As the quantities of *mar*, which are produced at household level, often are relatively small – less than 50 kg, but fetching up to 200 rupees per kg – the butter is usually taken to Skardu and sold there. As the quantities of potatoes for sale are much bigger and heavier, they are usually sold to traders

⁵⁶ This corresponds very well with the observation made by Bhatti in his survey of Balti villages: Except in the case of fruit, people were generally not approaching the market place. To sell grain is not at all a practice. Dealers from the market approached people in the villages to buy livestock, poultry and livestock products” (Bhatti 1993: 31).

(‘Pathans’) who come to the valley after harvest, purchase the potatoes, which are loaded into 100 kilo sacks, and organise the transportation to urban markets in lowland Pakistan.

Fig. 5.4: Nature of trade relations



Source: Informants in Thalay 1999

The ‘export’ of labour out of the valley is seasonal labour migration, which will be analysed in more detail in chapter six. Food stuff constitutes the most important item brought into the valley. As it will be outlined in much more detail below, almost all households in Thalay access a substantial part of their needs from outside the valley.

5.2.5 Subsistence and economy

Based on the analysis carried out so far, the bottom line would be that of Thalay as a farming community where agro-pastoral practices constitute the organization of time and space. The interplay between the natural resource base, the livestock, and the human population as a labour and consumer unit can, in its ideal form, be interpreted as a mode of ecologically sustainable production where the different components are carefully balanced. The continued fertility of the soils depends on the addition of animal manure, and the wellbeing of the livestock is a function of the ability of the farmer to feed the cattle during the winter. But it is the consumer unit that threatens to undo the system. The sustainable production does not suffice to sustain the population.

The dependence on food supplies from outside the valley is demonstrated here in relation to

wheat, the main food staple. According to the survey, and as reflected in table 5.3, more than 95% of all households in Thalay purchase wheat from outside the valley, and average purchases per consumer unit fluctuate between 50kg and 100kg. A certain correlation between the extent of farmland and the consumption of wheat can be identified. The average wheat purchases per consumer unit are lowest in Chundo and Gagoderik where land holdings per capita are the highest. The opposite extreme is Broqpa, where wheat purchases per consumer unit are highest and farmland per capita is lowest. In general, however, the picture is more complex, as the need for wheat purchases also depends on the priority given to domestic wheat production. As mentioned previously, the propensity to cultivate wheat is a function of altitude, the need for a second crop, and the profitability of potato production. Furthermore, the consumption of wheat also constitutes a food preference and is, together with rice, a symbol of affluence. Wheat is generally preferred over barley, the traditional staple, and *nan*, wheat bread, is served to guests.

Tab 5.3 Dependence on wheat supplies in Thalay

	Average purchases/ Consumer unit (kg)¹⁾	Average purchases/ Household (kg)	Cost/household (rupees) ³⁾
Khasumik ²⁾	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Ludas	98	517	9,041
Daltir	83	453	7,928
Baltoro	70	414	7,245
Broqpa	99	462	8,085
Tagary	67	362	6,335
Yearkhor	92	492	8,610
Chundo	54	297	5,198
Gagoderik	59	342	5,985
Hadangus	89	491	8,365
Padangus	56	288	5,040
Burdas	78	402	7,035

Source: Survey of 491 households, carried out 1998-2000

1): Each HH-member of 15 years+ equals one consumption unit. Each household member below 15 years equals 1/2 consumption unit.

2): Data on wheat consumption were not compiled for Khasurmik in the 1998-2000 survey. According to estimates based on the 1995 survey in Khasurmik, the average consumption of wheat flour per consumer unit was approx. 140 kg.

3): The price of one *maund* (40 kg) of imported wheat was approx. 700 rupees in 2000.

The dependency on wheat is most clearly demonstrated in Khasurmik, the northernmost village of Thalay. Due to the altitude, 3150m., the villagers had given up their attempts to grow wheat at all, thus using all cultivable land for barley and, to a lesser extent, potatoes. Nevertheless, in most households, the quantities of *ata*, wheat flour, which are purchased annually, exceed the amounts of barley available for human consumption (the total harvest of barley grains, minus sowing

seeds, and grains used for animal feed) (Jensen 1997: 68). So whereas farming practices remain governed primarily by subsistence needs, more than half the staple food needed in the households of the village has to be purchased from outside the valley. Within the rest of the valley, where at least some quantities of wheat are grown, the tendency is similar, though not as pronounced.

Altogether, the population in Thalay increasingly depends on supplies imported from outside the valley. As tab. 5.4 suggests, the resources needed in order to appropriate these food supplies do, increasingly so, derive from non-agricultural sources. Incomes from different kinds of off-farm employment are, at valley level, approx. three times higher than incomes from the sale of farm produce, and the actual number of households depending on off- and non-farm activities for income is 72% higher than the number depending on income from sale of farm produce.

Table 5.4 Village-wise income distribution

Village	Sale of farm produce		Off- and non-farm activities	
	Income/hh (rupees)	% of hh involved	Income/hh (rupees)	% of hh involved
Khasurmik	8,806	94	NI	85
Ludas	6,500	50	33,000	100
Daltir	6,349	61	22,691	86
Baltoro	5,845	36	20,633	84
Broqpa	4,904	48	13,542	96
Tagary	5,140	42	20,611	75
Yearkhor	6,293	40	21,703	87
Chundo	13,814	30	28,233	65
Gagoderik	5,856	64	16,070	92
Hadangus	8,133	47	22,448	78
Padangus	6,258	43	16,788	86
Burdas	8,152	40	15,948	74
Thalay	6,902	48	20,317	82

Source: Survey of 491 households, carried out 1998-2000

The one exception from this pattern would seem to be Khasurmik where almost all households are engaged in the sale of farm produce. Apart from the sale of *mar*, which is a characteristic of almost households in the village, Khasurmik was the only village where a collective deal at the time of the research had been made with a potato trader. More recent findings would suggest that potato production and trade increasingly have taken off in other villages in Thalay (AKRSP 1995).

Apart from this, the picture can seem relatively homogeneous, and inter village variations are relatively small, with the villages of Ludas and Chundo as exceptions. The village of Ludas stands out in terms of non- and off-farm employment, mainly because of the low number of households surveyed. Of the six households included in the survey in Ludas, two have household members who are government servants – thus making 36,000 rupees per year – and one has a member in the armed services. Though no attempts have been made to single out government servants in terms of income data, it is evident that the cash income of households with government servants would be well above average of all villages in Thalay. The considerably higher income from farm produce in Chundo is attributable to a small sample, with only seven households selling farm produce, so the high income from one household – involved in potato trading – influences the average. Chundo is also the village where the lowest proportion of households is involved in the sale of farm produce.

Broqpa is, as shown previously, the village that commands the smallest average acreage of farmland per household and depends the most on imported wheat supplies. The only village without any government servants, it stands out with the lowest annual cash income per household, one-third below the valley average for off- and non-farm activities.

What can be established would seem to be an inability of basically all households in the valley to sustain livelihoods through the utilisation of the natural resource base controlled by the population in Thalay. So whereas an analysis of the vertical dimension of livelihood strategies serves to establish an understanding of the nature of agro-pastoral strategies, it does not account for how livelihoods in the valley are sustained in a situation where there is a solid deficit in terms of supplies of staple food.

5.3 Horizontal section

This section constitutes an analysis of the process, whereby the means of territorialisation, which were introduced in the previous chapter, are used by the population in Thalay.

5.3.1 Schooling in Thalay

It would appear that the interest in schooling and education in Thalay has taken a sharp upward turn over the past two decades. The literacy rate of the population aged more than 10, which was 3.9% in 1981, had increased to 19.3% in 1998 (Government of Pakistan 1984, 2001b).

Schooling in Thalay can be divided in two categories: Islamic education and government secular education. Islamic education, carried out by local *mullahs* and *said*s, takes place in a total of seven *madrassas* in the valley, all adjacent to village mosques. Five of the seven *madrassas* are *Nurbakshi* – funded from the *zakat* collected on an annual basis in the valley – and two are *Ahl-I hadith*. Up to the end of the Dogra regime, the *madrassas* provided the only educational institutions available in Thalay.

The first government primary school (1st to 5th class) in Thalay was established in the village of Yearkhor in 1948, after the separation of the area from Kashmir. Over the next decades two more primary schools in respectively upper and lower Thalay were established, but up to the 1970s, schooling beyond 5th class was not available in the valley. Boys from the Thalay had to go to Dhagoni (middle school) just south of the valley or to Khapulu (high school), 40 kilometres away. In 1985, the middle school in Dhagoni was upgraded to high school, and since 1989 there has been a boy's high school in Thalay proper.

Since the early 1990s the availability of schools has increased considerably. The number of primary schools had by 2000 grown to eight, especially due to the establishment of five schools under the Social Action Programme (SAP) during the 1990s⁵⁷. Two middle schools, located in respectively Burdas and Daltir in lower and upper Thalay, offer schooling for boys in 6th and 7th class. The local high school, providing education up to 10th class, was in 1996 moved to a new, posh building located at Padangus in the middle of the valley. In 2000 the 20 teachers employed at the high school were teaching a total of just 80 students. The headmaster estimated that three to six of the students, who on an annual basis passed Matriculation, after 10th class, would pursue further education at the college in Skardu.

While increasing overall access to primary schooling, the SAP schools are also the first opportunity for secular education that girls in Thalay can avail themselves of, and girls constitute just under 40% of all pupils at primary school level. Advance beyond the 5th class either involves a move out of the valley, or has to be based on private education at home with exams under the auspices of the Alama Iqbal Open University.

⁵⁷ Under this programme, communities provide the school buildings, teachers, and management, while the Department of Education deposited 100,000 rupees in each school account, with the interest accruing on the deposit being used to pay the teachers' salaries. This resulted in the founding of more than 540 schools (Harlech-Jones et al 2005: 559).

Table 5.5 School attendance in Thalay 2001¹⁾

	Class	Boys	Girls
Primary	1 st	173	72
	2 nd	74	33
	3 rd	56	19
	4 th	55	14
	5 th	37	10
Middle	6 th	32	1
	7 th	25	2
High	8 th	17	
	9 th	15	
	10 th	9	
Total		493	151

1) Data compiled 2000 by Ghulam Mehedi Shahin, primary school teacher in Khasurmik, and Murad Ali Jawed, high school teacher in Thalay.

Table 5.5 shows the status quo of attendance in government schools in the autumn 2000. It is evident that school attendance is highest at the primary level, with 80% of all school seeking boys and 98% of all school seeking girls in the valley attending this level. The high number of pupils in class 1, attended by 35% of all school going children, and the dramatic drop between class one and two might also suggest that schooling is an avenue tested by many. While reasons for drop outs were not pursued systematically in the questionnaire, anecdotal evidence pointed to lack of interest as the main cause of drop outs. Whereas the number of schools offering the relevant education drops after the primary level, thereby increasing the distance to school, this is not reflected in a significant drop in the number of school going boys.

It is generally recognised, among both teachers and parents, that local educational standards are very low, so local schools are often, wholly or partly, bypassed by local students, who instead go to Karachi at an early age, especially if they have got relatives residing there⁵⁸. Among *Thalaypa* residing in Skardu, children's school attendance is generally much higher, and there is a willingness to invest in public schools, with English as the medium of instruction (annexe 1, # 26, 31).

Matriculation (exam after 10th class) is usually seen as the level where education can give access to employment opportunities. Matriculation has become a precondition for a contract in with the armed services, and most desk based government service positions also require matriculation. Table 5.6 shows the number of *Thalaypa* who have reached educational levels of matriculation

⁵⁸ Chapter eight will provide a much more detailed analysis of the linkages between migration to Karachi and the pursuing of education.

and beyond. There are, as it can be seen, big differences between the villages, both in terms of the actual numbers and in terms of the actual ratio of matriculates per household. It is in particular evident that the villages in upper and lower Thalay are characterised by very low matriculation ratios (matriculates per household).

Tab 5.6 Matriculates and beyond – by village and household

	No. of matriculates/village¹⁾	No. beyond Matric/village²⁾	Matriculates/household³⁾
Khasurmik	4	2	0.19
Ludas	1	1	0.33
Daltir	4	9	0.19
Broqpa	2	1	0.12
Baltoro	15	12	0.55
Tagary	6	4	0.28
Yearkhor	23	11	0.39
Chundo	4	9	0.57
Gagoderik	3	5	0.32
Hadangus	11	5	0.50
Padangus	2	2	0.14
Burdas	6	6	0.22
Total	81	67	0.31

Source: survey covering 491 households in Thalay.

- 1) Individuals per village who have passed matriculation (class 10), but not advanced to further education.
- 2) Individuals per village who have passed educational levels beyond matriculation.
- 3) Proportion of households per village where at least one individual has passed matriculation.

5.3.2 Government service

The government servant is perhaps the foremost testimony to Pakistani presence in Thalay. It could seem a contradiction that there are government servants in an area that the Pakistani government recognizes as internationally disputed. But the amenities supplied by the Northern Areas Public Works Department – water and electricity supply, and road maintenance – require local manning, as do health and educational facilities.

Altogether, the history of government service in Thalay is not an old one, as text box 5.2 suggests.

Text box 5.2

Fidar Ali's father, an uneducated man, wanted his only son to study. In order to advance beyond primary level, Fidar Ali had to go to Khapulu, the nearest town, located approx. 40 kilometres from his village. Fidar Ali estimates that at the time, in the mid 60s, a total of 4-5 boys from Thalay were studying at the high school (5th. 10th. class) in Khapulu. Finding work after passing Matriculation proved easy, as only few educated people were available in Baltistan in the 1960s. He worked in the *tehsil* office in Skardu for four years, before being transferred to Khapulu for another four years, during which time he also got married. The final 22 years of his government service he was stationed in Skardu, returning home on leave four times annually. During this period, his wife and children were living in the household of his father. In 1996 Fidar Ali retired and received a lump sum of 350,000 rupees as well as a monthly pension. He opened a shop in Thalay, which his oldest son is now looking after. The son has spent some time in Lahore, but as he did not pursue any education, but just worked as a kitchen hand, his father had told him to come home and look after the shop. The second son of Fidar Ali is presently living in Karachi (annexe 2, #11), completing his education while working in a tea store in Sadaar, Central Karachi.

(annexe 1, #16)

The story of Fidar Ali is illustrative in several ways. His trajectory has demonstrated how secular education has become instrumental in order to secure the position of government servant. Furthermore, it illustrates why government service is such an attractive employment avenue. Fidar Ali has received his salary for 30 years, he has received a sizeable lump sum at the time of his retirement, and he is paid a monthly pension.

The total number of *Thalaypa* employed in government service is not high. Out of the 491 households included in the survey, a total of 67 have gained access to this category, a figure similar to the total number of men, active and retired, who are or have been in army service. 50 of these work in Thalay. Two are women who are employed as health workers. Smaller numbers of government servants are based in Skardu, Gilgit, Islamabad and Karachi⁵⁹.

Table 5.7 depicts the distribution of government service positions within the valley at village basis, and it also shows the ratio of government servants per household in each village. Again, the very modest sample (six households) makes the village of Ludas stand out. It would appear

⁵⁹ It is difficult to find similar figures for other parts of Baltistan or Northern Areas. But in a study population ($n=4,203$, ≥ 18 years) in the Punial Valley in Ghizer District, 16.8% of the male population and 6.7% of the female population were government employees (Shah et al, 2004: 529), a proportion that is considerably higher than in Thalay.

that there is some correlation between educational standards and the number of government servants per village. It is again in the villages of upper and lower Thalay, where educational levels are lowest – as demonstrated in table 5.6 – that the lowest numbers of GS positions/household can be found.

Table 5.7 Government servants in Thalay

	GS positions	GS/ Household
Khasurmik	1	0.03
Ludas	2	0.33
Daltir	2	0.03
Broqpa	0	0
Baltoro	10	0.15
Tagary	6	0.17
Yearkhor	12	0.14
Chundo	3	0.13
Gagoderik	2	0.08
Hadangus	9	0.28
Padangus	1	0.04
Burdas	2	0.04
Total	50	0.10

Source: Survey of 491 households, carried out 1998-2000

The distinction between private jobs and government jobs, always in favour of the latter, was frequently made, both in Thalay and among migrants in Karachi:

“A private job is like the snow – when it is melted, it is over.
A government job is a fountain – it lasts forever”,⁶⁰.

It soon transpired that this is a well known metaphor in Baltistan, and others would be replacing the fountain with a glacier, thereby adapting the metaphor even more to local circumstances. Acquiring a government job is a permanent solution to the problem of sustenance. The government servant is paid a fixed monthly salary of upwards of 3,000 rupees, largely irrespective of the amount of labour invested, and a large lump sum – in Fidar Ali’s case 350,000 rupees – is paid at retirement after 30 years of service.

⁶⁰ A government servant from Thalay, living with his family in Islamabad, explained the well-known realities of the local job situation to me (annexe 1, #3)

Positioning for positions

As mentioned, most Thalaypa who work as government servants are now stationed in Thalay. The construction of electricity and water supply in the mid 80s, as well as the establishment of a high school and health clinics in Thalay, resulted in a need for government servants locally. It is, however, a demand that has been saturated a long time ago. Furthermore, there has over a number of periods been government bans on the recruitment of government servants, most importantly in the period 1993 to 1998. The consequence has been the accumulation of high numbers of matriculates and graduates with very few jobs to compete for (see text box below).

Text box 5.3

Said Ibrahim is 26 years old, and he comes from the village of Tassu. In 1984, aged 10, he went to Karachi where he was living with his older brother who is still living there on a permanent basis (annexe 2, # 18). Over the next 12 years he completed his studies in Karachi, passing Matric, F.A., B.A., and M.A.. Upon completion of his M.A., Ibrahim returned home, in 1997. He married a girl from his native village in 1999 and is now living with his wife and a baby daughter in his father's household.

(annexe 1, #13)

Said Ibrahim is, it can be argued, a member of the new generation of government servants in waiting. He left home at a very young age, and returned home after he had completed his education. He got married and had since then been waiting for a job in government service, which had so far not turned up. During the interview he made it clear that he was not interested in private jobs.

Ibrahim's example is not at all exceptional. The investment in education does not always pay off. According to the survey, a total of 67 had completed educational trajectories to levels beyond matriculation (table 5.6). Of these, 19 had managed to secure permanent positions as government servants. Another nine were working as teachers in SAP primary schools or *madrassas*, obtaining regular salaries but not the long-term security, which the government servant enjoys. But more than half of those who had returned home with college or university degrees, obtained in Skardu, Islamabad or Karachi, had not managed to secure any permanent salaried positions⁶¹.

“So what is the actual price of a post as government servant”? I asked the retired school teacher

⁶¹ The situation, where educational qualifications can not be converted into employment, is not unknown. As one of Netting's informants put it: “For two years I foddered the cows with my diploma” (Netting 1981: 104).

and now shopkeeper (annexe 1, # 18). Or rather, I enquired into the size of the bribes that had to be paid to the officials in charge of these kinds of postings. He said, regretting the sad state of affairs, that a post of school teacher would be around 50,000 rupees, whereas a job in the police force would cost between 80,000 and 100,000 rupees. Other local sources confirmed these figures. Even the position of a peon, the lowest ranking government servant, would cost 30,000 rupees. This practice had been around for six to seven years, since the early 1990s. It would seem as if it had been accelerating for two reasons: Firstly, supply had exceeded demand, as there were so many local graduates competing for positions. Secondly, there were a limited number of positions available, as there had been a general halt to new positions in the government sector, so only retired staff was replaced.

Whereas there was no denial of the figures stated above, none of the local respondents would, however, admit that they themselves had paid their way into their job. Ali Shah's son had been allowed into government service as a teacher at a nearby primary school, due to the outstanding services of his father. So the father said. Some, who did not have the right connections, sought to position themselves by working voluntarily in local government departments for a long time, and others had established timely alliances. An outcome of the local elections in October 1999 was that one of the local families, who has been advocating most vigorously for the winning candidate, was offered access to a position as teacher at the local high school. The condition was, however, that a sum of 60,000 rupees was paid to the official in charge of the nomination. This testifies to how access to a government posting necessitates both good connections and economic resources. The implication of this is would seem to be that positions in government service now are accessed in a different manner. Where Fidar Ali in the 1960s had no difficulties using his educational qualifications to get a position, the number of candidates with suitable qualifications has increased, so access to such positions had by the late 1990s become increasingly dependent on financial resources and connections to power holders. In his study from Askole, MacDonald refers to a similar practice: "Salaried government positions also exist in the village, such as at the 'hospital' or the 'school', and are controlled by relatively wealthy households which have access to power brokers in Skardu and the means to purchase these positions" (MacDonald 1994: 180).

5.3.3 Army service

Enrolling in the Pakistani army has been an option for the population in Thalay ever since the liberation of Baltistan in 1947-48⁶². When the rajah of Khapulu in 1948 raised an army in order

⁶² Military service is by no means an unusual phenomenon in Himalayan mountain societies, especially in a Nepalese context. In his study of the Gurung, also in Nepal, Macfarlane documents how wages, remitted from a total of 43

to fight the Dogra regime of Kashmir, 120 men from Thalay reputedly volunteered, and five were selected. The Pakistani armed forces remained popular in Thalay, and many referred to the fact that the garrison in Skardu had been upgraded to a regiment, “The Northern Light Infantry Regiment”, following the Kargil conflict in 1999. The army take-over of government in Pakistan, in October 1999, had also been welcomed locally⁶³.

In the survey there were a total of 34 active and 20 retired servicemen, thereby indicating that military service is an employment option that remains important at the local level. Table 5.8 provides an overview over the number of army personnel and their distribution within Thalay. As it appears, just over 10% of the households covered by the survey had a member that either had been or was doing army service, and these figures do not include the army pensioners who have moved away from Thalay with their households after retirement.

Table 5.8 Army personnel in Thalay

	Army personnel		Army personnel/ household
	Active	Retired	
Khasurmik	3	0	0.09
Ludas	1	0	0.17
Daltir	5	0	0.07
Broqpa	3	1	0.16
Baltoro	1	5	0.09
Tagary	1	3	0.11
Yearchor	10	3	0.15
Chundo	1	2	0.13
Gagoderik	0	1	0.04
Hadangus	0	2	0.06
Padangus	1	0	0.04
Burdas	8	3	0.19
Total	34	20	0.11

Source: Survey of 491 households in Thalay 1998-2000

In terms of the distribution of army personnel within the valley, the columns of active and retired

employees in Indian and British service, constitute more than 50% of total income (Macfarlane 1976: 159). Up to 60% of the males at the peak of their productive labour could be absent in the Nepalese villages. As Pignède emphasized: “We are looking at a society in demographic disequilibrium, composed of children, women, old people and a small number of men aged over 30 years” (Pignède 1962, in MacFarlane 1976: 289). In Kregel’s study from Kumaon in the Indian state of what is today known as Uttarakhand, 28% of male migrants are engaged in military service, the locally preferred means of employment that was in some cases proudly traced back to the British Raj (Kregel 1997: 178).

⁶³ Due to the sensitivity of the issue, as explained previously, I did not enquire into the specific nature of the individual army trajectory – e.g. geographical location of army service, involvement in action, etc.

personnel reveal different patterns. Whereas more than half of all active army personnel in 1998-2000 did come from just two villages – Yearkhor and Burdas – army service had also become much more of an employment option in the villages of upper Thalay where it had previously not been an established tradition. Furthermore, access to the armed forces had become altogether more difficult, as the army authorities now required that applicants had passed Matriculation. Even so, only three in ten of the applicants from Thalay were accepted, according to local estimates.

Among those interviewed, the motivations for joining the armed forces could largely be divided into two categories. One was duty and patriotism. The individual serviceman had volunteered in order to “serve my country”, and when asked to identify strong and bad points about the army service, most were unable to find any bad points, and “everything was good”. Altogether this could seem to reflect the popularity of the Pakistani army in Thalay. Small boys ran around wearing caps with the imprint ‘Pak army’, and in the houses of active army personnel, their absence was marked by framed photographs, portraying the moustached soldiers in uniform.

The other category refers to the understanding of an army career as a remedy against poverty and unemployment: “There we get food every day”, one ex-serviceman said (see textbox 5.4 below). The army offered a way out of a difficult situation, securing a permanent monthly income and reducing the number of mouths to be fed at household level. In 1999, the minimum monthly pay to a contracted soldier would be approximately 3,000 rupees, out of which two thirds usually would be remitted back to the sending household⁶⁴.

The economic incentives have improved considerably since 1948 when the first *Thalaypa* joined the armed forces. When Hussein from Gagoderik – one of the four *Thalaypa* to join in 1948 – retired from the army in 1971 after 23 years of service, he received 50 rupees as a token (annexe 1, # 29). When Ibrahim from Yearkhor retired in 1999, after 22 years in the Pakistani army, he received a lump sum of 550,000 rupees as well as a monthly pension of 1,800 rupees (table 5.9). Accordingly, the army no longer ‘just’ provides livelihood security and a regular cash income during the service period. It also provides what must be seen as a substantial sum of capital at the end of the service period.

⁶⁴ Income security was also the most important factor identified by Stöber in his study from Yasin: “Der Dienst in den Streitkräften ... ist beliebt, da er ein über einen längeren Zeitraum gesichertes Einkommen bietet, was für einen jungen Man mit geringer formaler Bildung sonst schwer zu erreichen ist” (Stöber 2001: 188). English translation: “Service in the armed forces ... is coveted, as it ascertains a secure income over a long period of time, which is otherwise difficult to achieve for a young man of limited formal education (by author).”

Retired servicemen

15 years is the minimum length of a contract in the armed forces, and it is mostly only officers who can have their contract extended considerably beyond 15 years. Whereas 15 years can seem a very long period, it is also a time span that makes for some very young pensioners. After completion of the normal service period, the retired service man is in his mid to late 30s (see table 5.9). He returns home after having been away for approximately half his life. Following what would seem to be the normal trajectory, he has married during a leave from the army, and his wife is living in his parental household. Furthermore, he brings with him a considerable capital that consists of both a lump sum and a monthly pension, both depending on rank in the army and length of service⁶⁵.

Table 5.9: Characteristics of ex-service men

#	Village	Household size	Army career			Age at retirement	Pension (rupees)
			Start	Finish	Years		
1	Baltoro	4	1982	1997	15	33	300,000
2	Baltoro	5	1977	1995	18	36	NA
3	Baltoro	6	1969	1987	18	35	100,000
4	Yearkhor ¹	5	1966	1994	28	45	600,000
5	Yearkhor ³	8	1973	1991	18	37	170,400
6	Yearkhor	NA	1977	1999	22	37	550,000
7	Gagoderik	7	1948	1971	23	44	50
8	Hadangus	4	1972	1987	15	39	94,000
9	Hadangus	8	1972	1987	15	38	94,000
10	Burdas ²	4	1983	1998	15	34	NA
11	Burdas ²	4	1978	1998	20	37	NA
12	Burdas ^{1,2}	5	1967	1991	24	41	253,000

Source: Interviews with 12 ex-service men 1998-2000.

1) Now lives with household in Skardu.

2) Hajji

3) Financed brother's hajj.

The pension checks, which the ex-servicemen bring back to Thalay, represent major sums in the local villages. But they are also sources of contention that cause ruptures at household level. The actual amounts differ according to the number of years spent in the army and the rank held. But the lump sum, which the pensioner is paid, is easily the equivalent to the total household cash

⁶⁵ According to similar studies from Nepal, there is little doubt that army pensioners are seen as corner stones in their native villages: "These Jamadars and Subedars, whose pension checks represent substantial sums in village terms, are always known by their title, as are their wives. They are respected men in the community" (Hitchcock 1963: 81).

income of 10 to 20 years (see table 5.9).

The majority of the ex-service men live in relatively small households – in table 5.9 averaging 5.4 – which they themselves were heading after having broken away from parental households. The reason stated was, more often than not, that the women in the parental household did not get along, with tensions between the wife of the service man and the other women in the household. But according to other sources, as well as some of the ex-servicemen, the split often occurred due to disagreements over the pension. In many instances this sum seems to have disrupted the household hierarchy. The returning sons would be expected to give the pension to their father, and refusal to comply could result in the household breaking up, as it was the case for Ghulam Abbas (text box 5.4)⁶⁶.

Text box 5.4

Ghulam Abbas is 35 years old, and he lives with his wife and three small children in the village of Baltoro, in a small house adjacent to the homestead of his in-laws. He joined the army in 1981, at the age of 17. In retrospect he states that as he could not get an education, he would not be able to get a good job, so therefore he joined the army. When asked to identify good and bad points of life in the army, he stated that "...there we get food every day". Furthermore, the pay had increased considerably during his stay in the army, from 150 rupees per month in 1981 to 3,500 in 1997, when he retired.

When Ghulam Abbas returned home two years ago, with a pension of almost 300,000 rupees, he and his father had got into a fight, as he did not want to hand over the money. As a result, he had been kicked out from his home. He had now managed to buy a few kanals of land, but he mainly lived off his pension.

(annexe 1, # 22)

The story of Ghulam Abbas seems symptomatic of some of the army pensioners, who in a way could seem to have got lost upon getting home. Having left home at the age of 15-17 years, they had – at the time of their retirement – typically spent half their lives in the army. Having separated from their parental homestead, they would now be running their own households, living off their pension that might last them for five, 10, or even 15 years. They would seem to enjoy only little respect in the local communities. In the village of Baltoro, I had been

⁶⁶ In his study from Yasin in the Gilgit District, Stöber makes a similar observation: "Als Mitglied der väterlichen oder brüderlichen Haushalts wird von dem zurückkehrenden Soldaten erwartet, dass die Mittel für die Ziele des Haushalts zur Verfügung stehen ... In diesen Ansprüchen liegt ein beträchtliches Konfliktpotential, das nicht selten in einer Teilung des Haushalts, einer Abspaltung der Kernfamilie des Soldaten mündet." (Stöber 2001: 190). English translation: "As a member of the paternal or fraternal household, the homecoming soldier is expected to make the means available for the goals of the household ... There is in these demands a considerable potential for conflict, which not rarely results in a division of the household, a break-away of the soldier's nuclear family" (by author).

interviewing two of the not so successful pensioners, Ghulam Abbas being one of them. While I was in the midst of the second interview, there was a shout from a group of men, who were sitting nearby: “Why do you talk to the two most hopeless men in the village?” one of them demanded in Balti. While obviously irritated by my choice of respondents, this seemed, more than anything, a public humiliation of the man I was talking to (annexe 1, # 23).

At the other end of the spectrum are those who have managed to convert their financial capital into values that are respected according to local standards. Three of the retired service men could also call themselves “hajji”, having invested in the pilgrimage to Mecca. “First I served my nation, then I served my God”, was the impeccable reasoning of Hajji Ahmad, a happy army pensioner in his late 30s, living in the village of Burdas. He had retired from the army in 1995, after 15 years, he had separated from the joint household of his brothers and built a new house for himself and his small nuclear family consisting of five members. In 1998 he completed the *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, at a cost of around 120,000 rupees (annexe 1, # 20).

But it seems evident that a number of pensioners have returned home with the intention of leaving. Three of the ex-servicemen had left Thalay with their families within a year of retirement, all of them in order to settle in Skardu.

5.4 Livelihoods in transformation

In a study of Balti villages, Magrath in 1986 concluded that the “...main trends in Baltistan’s village economy are the increase in male wage employment, increased use of agricultural inputs and machinery, and reduction in animal husbandry” (Magrath 1986: 21). This very much reflects a development that can be observed in some parts of Baltistan where it has been possible to replace livestock with agricultural inputs and machinery. On the river plains of Dhagoni, just south of Thalay, and in the wide Shigar Valley tractors and threshing machines are making the *dzos* superfluous, and chemical fertilizers, locally known as *Pakistani lut*, are increasingly substituting animal manure (Streefland et al 1995, Jensen 1997 for a short analysis of farming systems in Dhagoni). This has eased the labour burden, especially of men, as work operations, which are now being carried out by machines, like the carrying of manure and ploughing, traditionally have been considered men’s work. Furthermore, these developments reinforce integration to a monetised economy, as the mechanized operations, available against cash payment, replace resources from within the farming system (Se Streefland et al. 1995).

These tendencies are not (yet) found in Thalay. Here topographical constraints result in a

multitude of small, terraced fields at many levels. The average holding, 0.75 hectare, can easily consist of 20 to 25 fields, thus making the use of tractors for ploughing purposes impossible. As opposed to other parts of the Khapulu Valley, threshing machines have not been introduced either, and the only mechanisation of traditional practices was the establishment of an oil mill in 1995, for churning apricot kernels into oil – thereby relieving the work burden of local women. The use of chemical fertiliser, practiced by approximately half the households in Thalay, has been considered more of a supplement to existing practices – though this might change with the increased emphasis on the cultivation of potatoes.

A contextual study, carried out in the Northern Areas in 1995, classified 70% of the population of the Khapulu Valley – including Thalay – as belonging to ‘a late stage of subsistence’, characterised by ‘insufficient farmland size’ and ‘low interest in innovations’. Food shortages are met by casual jobs in the area, and seasonal migration in the winter months (Streefland et al. 1995: 95). The study drew up a typology, stratifying the Northern Areas more or less according to the extent that local farm production was integrated into the market economy. Accordingly, the farming population in the ‘early transitional stage’ have initiated some form of diversification into cash crops, and they are “receptive for innovations” (ibid: 96). In the Khapulu Valley, which Thalay in this context should be considered part of, about 10% of the local farmers have moved into an ‘advanced transitional stage’, with most of the farmland utilized for the production of cash crops. It would follow quite evidently that this stage is characterized by the highest dependency on imported food supplies. So an advanced stage would, on these premises, trade self sufficiency for profit maximization.

Disregarding what would seem an evolutionary tendency, and certainly questioning the soundness of an approach, which would seem to trade self sufficiency for profit maximisation, the study does provide a yardstick against which to examine the findings from Thalay. There is nothing in the findings to suggest a down-scaling of existing farming practices, and the conflict over water resources also demonstrates the continued significance of the natural resource base – and the continued willingness to invest in its utilisation. Whereas it previously has been argued that the access to resources from outside the agrarian sphere has resulted in a ‘conservation’ of existing agricultural practices in Thalay (Jensen 1997), the reported increase in the production of potatoes, especially prevalent over the last few years, challenges that argument, as large scale potato production depends on access to urban markets in the Pakistani lowlands. The ‘food shortages’ referred to by Streefland et al are certainly confirmed by the findings in the present study, and they would seem to point towards an emerging disparity between the agrarian and the rural economy, as demonstrated through the dependence on staple food supplies from outside

Thalay, and through the fact that most of the cash needed to purchase non-local food supplies derive from activities outside agricultural production. The implication of this is a need to focus on the other types of assets, which the local population makes use of in order to sustain livelihoods.

In a relatively early study from Nepal, Hitchcock sums up the economic and political consequences of the political and economic integration of a village community: “An increased monetization of the economy and an enlarged flow of goods from the outside; a tendency for both money and land to concentrate in fewer hands; government-stimulated changes in educational, political, and economic spheres, with effects frequently much attenuated by administrative fade” (Hitchcock 1963: 81). Whereas the monetization of the local economy in Thalay is an obvious characteristic of the process of integration, the concentration of assets is less prevalent, at least in terms of traditional assets like farmland and livestock. The issue is rather a diversification of livelihoods, as new types of assets have gained importance. Access to and control over natural assets – e.g. farmland and pastures – and productive assets – e.g. livestock and access to irrigation channels – are essential to livelihood strategies based a utilization of vertical vegetation zones. But as revealed by the significant and wide-spread dependence on non-agricultural income sources and the purchases of imported wheat supplies, there is a clear indication that livelihoods increasingly depends on other types of assets.

A total of just under 20% of the households covered by the survey were or had been involved in government service or service in the armed forces⁶⁷. But the importance of these employment categories is not only reflected in the actual numbers employed, but rather in the fact that they provide indicators of the direction that livelihood strategies are taking. The engagement with these types of employment constitutes strategic choices, which demonstrate how the local population has adapted to the opportunities that have arisen as a result of the process of territorialisation. Access to the position as government servant is conditioned by a long-term involvement in an educational trajectory – easily 15 years – that is also set up by the Pakistani state and completed using Urdu, the Pakistani language, as the medium of instruction, and access to employment in the armed forces has also become conditional on the completion of ten years schooling . It is beyond the scope of this work to determine if this can be taken to imply that the local population also subscribes to Pakistan as an idea, taking on a Pakistani identity. But as my

⁶⁷ Similar employment patterns can be found in parts of lowland Pakistan, and in his study of two villages in the Punjab, LeFebvre documents how respectively 25% and 43% of the men with an extra agricultural activity have been or are enrolled in the army or the police (LeFebvre 1990: 72).

research assistant – high school teacher and government servant – put it: “First I am Muslim, then I am Balti, and then I am Pakistani”.

Finally, whereas agro-pastoral activities and trans-local government institutions constitute different types of livelihood activities, contingent on very diverse assets, the common ground shared by horizontal and vertical aspects of livelihoods in Thalay must also be emphasized. That common ground concerns livelihood security. The careful balancing between the different components of the agro-pastoral farming system – livestock numbers, soil fertility, fodder resources – reflect a strategy aimed, in principle, at producing infinitely. Likewise, the main motivation for employment in government service or in the armed forces would seem to be the certainty of a monthly salary for 15 to 25 years.

Chapter six

Migration practices in Thalay

6.0 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the spatial orientation of and the motivations behind the migration practices, which the population in Thalay is involved in. Continuing the line of inquiry laid out in the previous chapter, the analysis thereby continues pursuing the horizontal dimension of local livelihoods. Where chapter five focused on how the territorialisation process impacted livelihood strategies and activities in Thalay, the analysis in this chapter explores how the (male) population of Thalay operates within the spatial room for manoeuvre, which can be accessed as a result of the territorialisation process.

In order to establish a broader historical and geographical context, the history of Balti exchange and migration practices prior to the inclusion in the Pakistani state in 1948 will first be presented. These will be divided into three types: Exchange routes between Baltistan and neighbouring territories; seasonal mobility within Baltistan that can be attributed to diversified resource potentials within the area; migration practices which can be seen as directly or indirectly conditioned by the Dogra regime.

Secondly, I will analyse and discuss the migration practices of the population in Thalay. For analytical purposes, I will make a distinction between two types of migration practices: One, by

far the most common type, is characterised by its reoccurring and seasonal nature, and it would seem integrated in the annual cycle of things to do in order to make a living; the other type is characterised mainly by its non-cyclical, non-seasonal nature. The presentation of this type is much shorter in the present chapter, as it will be subjected to a much more thorough analysis in chapter eight.

6.1 Migration and exchange practices before 1947

Balti migration practices before 1947 can be linked to be different motivations. British observers and travellers – arriving in Baltistan from the more fertile southern Kashmir – readily attributes migration in search of wage labour to the inability of the land base to support a growing population (Drew 1875, Knight 1905). MacDonald pursues a different perspective in his work on the history of portering relations in Northern Pakistan, as he suggests that migration at least in part was induced by the excessive tax demands of the Dogra regime (MacDonald 1996: 352). Both positions are likely to have explanatory value, but it is also important to caution against too generalised causal explanations. The natural resource base, and especially the available land base, varies considerably within Baltistan, and this is likely to have bearing for both migration practices within Baltistan and for the decision to migrate from Baltistan⁶⁸.

6.1.1 Exchange routes

Until 1947, Baltistan was linked to the Trans-Himalayan trade and exchange routes. Skardu was the westernmost destination of Ladakhi salt traders, approximately 15 days' march from Leh. Here they could get the best return on their salt, fetching up to six times its volume in wheat (Rizvi 1999: 109). Often, as surpluses of wheat were rare in Baltistan, the salt was exchanged for an equal weight of apricots that could be sold upon arrival back in Leh. Baltistan had been known throughout the Tibetan sphere as *Suri-Butan*, the land of apricots (Vigne 1842: 331). This way the only surplus produce of Baltistan could be marketed, and, as opposed to the salt-for-wheat trade, the trade in apricots was weight neutral, so the return journey from Baltistan could be undertaken with the same number of load animals, an important factor given the hardships involved in the journey (Rizvi 1999: 107)⁶⁹.

The other major trade route involving Baltistan was the route linking Yarkand in Xinjiang with

⁶⁸ For example, MacDonald's work is based on fieldwork in the Shigar Valley, where farmland is most plentiful.

⁶⁹ The closure of the Ladakhi trade routes in the aftermath of Partition also resulted in local shortages of salt in Baltistan - see Stephens 1953: 187-188.

the Punjab, and in this process traversing Baltistan. The origins of this Trans-Karakorum Trade remain undocumented, but Rizvi mentions stray references pointing to trade connections as early as sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Rizvi 1999). Altogether this indicates the integration of Baltistan in a network of spatial practices, as regards both trade and migration routes that link Baltistan to Ladakh and the northern parts of British India. This is then the network that since 1947 has been hermetically closed. The present day linkage, following the Indus River, was until 1947 the least likely route, avoided due to religious animosities. As Knight remarks on the route following the Indus river: "...the route afforded by this is far more dangerous to the traveler than the highest pass, for that portion of the Indus Valley which lies between this country and India is inhabited by blood-thirsty and fanatical tribes, Mahomedans of the Sunni sect" (Knight 1905: 245). So the action space of the local population was also delimited due to the antagonisms existing between the predominantly Shi'ī population of Baltistan and the Sunni dominated areas further west and south.

6.1.2 Migration within Baltistan

Migration practices within Baltistan have not been documented very well, if at all. But the shortage of farmland in southern Baltistan – the valleys of Khapulu and Kharmang – is relatively well-documented, both in the present day (Magrath 1986) and in the past, as demonstrated here in this comment on the livelihood conditions in Kiris, a large village on the banks of the Indus in the Western edge of the Khapulu Valley: "They are wretchedly poor, and state that for half the year they suffer greatly from want of food" (Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladak 1890: 499). For the population in such areas it was necessary to attempt to access resources from outside their own production sphere.

For many, the answer to what seemed a recurring food shortage was a seasonal move to the wide and fertile Shigar Valley. After having completed the harvest in their native villages, groups of men from all southern Baltistan would go to Shigar and offer their services, often competing with other groups. Whereas the actual harvest work usually was finished, they would be involved in the heavy and time-consuming task of carrying manure to the fields. They would be fed during the work period and paid in kind. The marrying of women from southern Baltistan into Shigar was part of the same survival strategy. The presence of the women from southern Baltistan in Shigari households would permit a few of their relatives to go to Shigar in the autumn, do some work and stay the winter. On return, they would be carrying with them supplies for their own

household where their absence had meant that existing supplies could be stretched for longer⁷⁰.

So based on the very limited anecdotal evidence available, migration practices within Baltistan can be seen as motivated by diverse resource potentials within an area otherwise characterized by similar farming strategies and practices.

6.1.3 Migration from Baltistan

Early European visitors to Baltistan were quite unanimous that Baltistan seemed overpopulated, and they were fast to link the population aspect to religion: "Dwelling in a country almost as barren as Ladakh, and being polygamous Mussulmans, they are far poorer than their well-to-do Malthusian neighbours" (Knight 1905: 246). Like all the early explorers to Baltistan, Knight had arrived from Ladakh. Ecologically similar, Ladakh constitutes an obvious frame of reference, and the Ladakhi custom of polyandry, the practice of having more than one husband at one time, is well suited to contain population growth in a resource scarce environment - hence the reference to Malthusian thought⁷¹, though there is, and was, little to suggest that polygamy is or has been widespread in Baltistan⁷². When travelling through Baltistan in 1871, Drew observed that "...Baltistan is crowded; the population is overflowing. Happily they are a people more likely to fare well as emigrants than the Ladakhis... Accordingly, colonies of Baltis have been made in several countries, where food is more abundant, and frugality and industry (which are characteristics of the Balti emigrant) can get their reward" (Drew 1875: 358). Drew refers to Balti settlements in Yarkand in north-western China, as well as in different parts of 'Kashmir and Jummoo'.

The greatest outlet for Balti migrants was the British territory: "It is common for the Baltis, in parties of half a dozen or so, to find their way through Ladakh to Simla, taking with them a load of dried apricots, by the sale of which they provide food on the road and perhaps a little purse at their journey's end" (Knight 1905: 246). Knight also refers to his meeting with a group of Balti

⁷⁰ I am grateful to Hassan Shahd in Shigar for supplying this information on food redistributions and migration within Baltistan.

⁷¹ On polyandry in the Tibetan influenced area, see Rasmussen 1982, Goldstein 1981. In a Tibetan context, Goldstein sums up on the functions of this form of marriage and family: "(1) It precluded the division of family fields between male heirs each generation; (2) it concentrated labour in the household, therein facilitating utilization of multiple ecological niches (e.g. pastoralism, farming, trading) in the presence of heavy corvee taxes, and (3) it unintentionally reduced aggregate fertility" (Goldstein 1981: 11). Rasmussen refers to a specific village study in Ladakh, where only the oldest son in a family initially gets married. But all his younger brothers become part of the marriage when they come of age.

⁷² One the contrary, it could seem. When my interpreter, married against his will at the age of 14, had indicated that he wished to take a second wife, the father had made it clear that in that case, he would kill him.

migrants, "...clothed in filthy and scanty rags, and of a half-starved appearance" (Knight 1905: 163). There is little documentation on the Balti migrant population in Simla and the other British hill stations. Most research has focused on Simla in its capacity as the summer capital of British India in the period 1864-1947, and hence focus has been on the upper strata of colonial society (Bhasin 1992). But accounts from former Balti residents in Simla convey a picture of a fairly rooted community, composed partly of a resident population of 3-4,000, partly of migrants who would typically work in Simla for a couple of years before returning home. As Balti migrants became more dominant, a neighbourhood previously known as *Ladakhi Mohallah* gradually became *Balti Mohallah*. The resident population would be engaged in different trades, of which three did stand out: A baker and confectionary line; service in the British army – though only an option for Shi'is; building contractors, who would then engage non-permanent migrants for specific construction works.⁷³

6.2 History of migration in Thalay

Though Thalay is located in the south-eastern part of Baltistan, and there is a general scarcity of farmland, the valley was not part of the seasonal exchange of labour for food, which was sketched in the previous section. According to the local population exchanges with Shigar would rather concern different types of products. Dairy products, mainly *mar*, produced in Upper Thalay would be exchanged for apricots produced in Shigar where tree products would be more plentiful due to the lower altitude.

According to the collection of available information from the region, compiled by the British army in the late 19th. century, and known as the gazetteer, Thalay "...has a certain reputation for wealth in the rest of Khapulu" (Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladák 1890: 815) - a wealth linked to what is elsewhere in the gazetteer described as the fertility of the valley (ibid: 488), so it would seem as if the valley altogether was better off than the rest of southern Baltistan. At roughly the same time in history, Neve, a British doctor stationed for 30 years in Kashmir, crossed Thalay Lah from Shigar, and travelled the length of the valley, commenting on what he considered land scarcity: "There seemed little possibility of bringing more land under the plough, and every year some of the men go off to Simla and other places to earn money as navvies" (Neve 1913: 97). What Neve witnessed was a valley of an estimated 250 to 300 houses, or roughly 1,500-1,800 people, a population that had almost tripled by the late 1990s. So Thalay was considered fertile and relatively wealthy, but at the same time a site of migration to British India.

⁷³ I owe this information to Mohammad Khan who migrated from Kargil to Simla in 1929 at the age of 10, and fled from Simla in 1947, eventually settling in Karachi (annexe 2, # 34)

In Thalay, some of the Simla migrants still recall fragments of the old migrant practices. Apu Safai, an octogenarian from the village of Padangus, narrated how many people from Thalay had been going to Simla in the decades prior to Partition in 1947. He himself had been ganging up with three to four other men from his village. They went on foot, following the Indus through Kharmang and Kargil. From here they would turn west to Srinagar and continue to Jammu where they could catch the train, first to Delhi, and then in north-easterly direction to Simla. Altogether it would be a journey of 25-30 days.

In Simla, the Thalay people lived together in dormitory-like places. They were hired by different Balti contractors, and were always paid a fixed sum for the completion of a specified piece of work. It would usually be different kinds of construction works, and Safai had been making gutters for much of the time he stayed in Simla. Safai stayed for two years in Simla, and he was from the last generation of temporary Balti migrants in Simla. In 1947 he was arrested by the British and sent home. He was, so he says, carrying with him five loads of sugar as well as savings from two years. Similar stories were told by other old men of Thalay. They narrated how the return of the migrants was a cause for celebration in those days. The homecoming migrant would pause at the Shyok, waiting for word to spread in the valley. Then his village people would come down to the banks of the Shyok, they would receive him, and there would be celebrations back home in the village. “Now”, one of the old men said with a snort, “they just return in a jeep”.

Altogether, it would seem as if the migration linkage between Thalay and Simla were relatively well-established, as Neve in the late 1880s refers to Simla-migration in relation to Thalay, and the practice is only terminated due to Partition in 1947. For the same reason it is obvious that the ceasefire line resulting from the Kashmir conflict effectively blocked the old migration routes, and that new routes had to evolve within the room for manoeuvre conditioned by the state of Pakistan and by the construction of road infrastructure. The implication of this has been the gradual re-orientation of migration practices, first to the west, to the rapidly growing urban township of Gilgit, and then, as the road network was developed, to the Pakistani lowlands.

The migration practices, which *Thalaypa* engage in today can as a point of departure be divided into seasonal and long-term activities. Below, I will first elaborate on the different types of seasonal migration, and then discuss the most prominent kinds of long term migration.

6.3 Seasonal migration

“Now all young men except me and another have left the village”. Youssaf, my interpreter, said this one cold morning in late November 1999, not entirely without implicitly lamenting his own lot. The words impressed me, and they put the entire issue of seasonal off-farm employment into perspective. I knew that now was the season for leaving. It was after the wedding ceremonies, traditionally taking place in October and November, and it was getting significantly colder in the valley. The cargo jeeps, which normally arrived during the afternoons, loaded with wheat sacks and other supplies for the winter, would leave again the next morning, with young men standing on the back, rarely adequately prepared for the 3.5 hour journey in subzero temperatures that would eventually take them to Skardu. From here further transportation by bus would be available, to the eventual destination in Gilgit, the Punjab, or Karachi.

Table 6.1 provides an overview over the number of households who at valley level are involved in the different types of seasonal migration.

Tab 6.1 Seasonal migration by type

Portering		Mining		Gilgit	
no. of migrants	% of HHs	no. of migrants	% of HHs	no. of migrants	% of HHs
61	12	87	18	138	28

Source: Survey over 491 households, carried out 1998-2000.

6.3.1 Gilgit

The ceasefire line resulting from the Kashmir conflict effectively blocked the old migration and trade routes. But the new political reality, which Pakistan constituted, also opened new avenues, and the new migrant destination was Gilgit, rapidly emerging as the administrative hub of Northern Areas⁷⁴.

Seasonal migration from Thalay to Gilgit commenced soon after 1947. But transportation was a problem, and the walk to Gilgit would take a total of 14 to 16 days. The migrants would stay for two months, making terraced fields or constructing houses, and then return home. Altogether a

⁷⁴ Migration to Gilgit was not entirely unknown by this stage. By the late 19th century, a considerable number of Baltis would every year migrate to the Gilgit District to look for work mainly in agriculture, and in the winter 1905-06 the Gilgit Diaries refer to 1,000 Balti migrants in a generally poor health condition, who had arrived in order to work in different types of construction projects (Gilgit Diaries 30.12.1905; 6.1.1906, in Stöber 2001). The motivations for their move were partly lack of food in their native villages, partly the repression of the Dogra regime (Stöber 2001: 191).

pattern of seasonal migration was being established, replacing the southbound linkages which had been 'disconnected' in 1947. But approximately 30% of the total time away from Thalay would be spent travelling between home and destination.

This aspect has changed dramatically since then, due to the construction of the Karakorum Highway and the Indus Valley Road, which since 1980 has secured access from Skardu to Gilgit by vehicular transport. Further road constructions, linking Skardu to Khapulu, and another linking Thalay to the Skardu-Khapulu road, have improved matters dramatically. By the late 1990s, the approximately 300km from Thalay to Gilgit could routinely be managed by public transport in one day.

Migration to Gilgit constitutes the most popular type of seasonal migration, both in terms of the actual numbers involved and the proportion of households in each village who are migrating. Due to the lower altitude, 1300 meters above sea level, the winter climate is considerably milder than in Baltistan, and daytime temperatures are rarely below zero. Wages are also higher than in Skardu. An unskilled labourer was in 2000 paid approximately 100 rupees per day in Gilgit against 80 rupees in Skardu.

In 28% of the households covered by the survey, a male member of the household would be going to Gilgit in order to work as an unskilled or skilled labourer, staying away from late October until the start of the farming season the following year. When deducting expenses for transportation, food and accommodation, a migrant would bring home 5,000 to 12,000 rupees.

According to local respondents, the proportion of households, who sent members to Gilgit, seemed relatively stable. In some households the father would be going, in others the son(s), depending on age and household structure. The oldest migrants would be around 50 years, the youngest 16 to 18 years, and in many households male members had been going to Gilgit for 20 to 30 years.

6.3.2 Mining

Khosjab is a coal mining area in Punjab and very much the wintertime employment option of the villages of upper Thalay. When I enquired into why this particular mine was so attractive, the answer was that the mine belonged to 'an honest man', a Balti. Later it transpired that a man from Daltir, now known as Apu Shukur, had been the pioneer, as he went to Khosjab in 1968. He was now co-owner of the coal mine, and lived permanently in Khosjab. According to locals, this

would help them to get work in the better parts of the mine, and the link to Daltir was reflected thereby that half of all migrants from Thalay, who went to Khosjab, came from Daltir. It would seem as if local villagers, men aged 18-50 years, had been going to Khosjab as soon as the links were established, and many households have had members going for 20 or 25 years. Motivations for going to Khosjab would be linked to job security as well as payment security. There is always work to be had in Khosjab, and “...if you work hard, you make much money”. Generally, savings after a winter, four to five months, would amount to 8,000 to 15,000 rupees.

6.3.3 Portering

The tourism industry is a niche that has grown considerably since the construction of the road network, as Baltistan overall has become more accessible. Intrepid expeditions have attempted to climb the 8000 meter peaks of the area since the 1930s, K2 was climbed the first time in 1954, so accordingly a demand for local porters has existed for a long time in specific parts of Baltistan. In the Hushey Valley, running parallel to Thalay but on the access route to Masherbroom (one of the highest peaks in the area), local men have since the early 1960s been working as porters and guides for expeditions and groups, and the economy of the village of Hushey is very much based on, and thriving from, incomes from tourism (Hewitt 1999).

In Thalay, the impact of the tourism industry has been much more modest. Portering and guiding have been popular, though highly seasonal employment opportunities since the late 1980s, and 63 men were, according to the survey, employed as porters or guides during the short mountaineering and trekking season from July to the end of September. Respondents were careful to specify their position in the particular job hierarchy, be it guide, assistant guide, cook, assistant cook, or just a porter. This was not unimportant as the guide makes four times the money of the porter, in 2000 800 rupees and 200 rupees respectively for a stage - a pre-specified measure, normally equal to the distance covered in a day. But as opposed to other kinds of local employment, job opportunities have to be pursued, and they are more uncertain. So small groups of younger men from the villages in Thalay take up station in Skardu during the summers, for periods of two to three months, live in shared accommodation, and wait for foreign tourists to arrive. Actual employment periods may only total half this period, and earnings vary a lot, from 10.000 to 25.000 rupees per season.

6.3.4 Patterns of seasonal migration and local employment at village level

In tab. 6.2 below, an attempt is made to summarise the different types of seasonal migration and

local wage labour at village level – the latter only to provide an idea of the extent of local employment activities. As the main focus was on migration, enquiries into the nature of local employment activities were limited.

Tab. 6.2 Seasonal migration and local employment, by village

	Type of migration						Local work	% of HHs
	Porte-ring	% of HHs	coal mine	% of HHs	Gilgit	% of HHs		
Khasurmik	19	59	22	69	2	6	3	9
Ludas	1	17	0	0	1	17	1	17
Daltir	11	16	41	59	7	10	23	33
Baltoro	3	4	3	4	28	42	18	27
Broqpa	0	0	5	20	13	52	4	16
Tagary	4	11	5	14	10	28	18	50
Yearkhor	13	15	1	1	34	39	47	54
Chundo	0	0	1	4	1	4	12	43
Gagoderik	1	4	0	0	8	32	12	36
Hadangus	6	19	5	16	7	22	7	19
Padangus	2	7	4	14	10	36	16	61
Burdas	1	2	0	0	17	32	22	32
TOTAL	61	12	87	18	138	28	183	37

Source: Survey over 491 households, carried out 1998-2000.

There are, as summarised in table 6.2, considerable intra-valley differences in terms of the different types of seasonal migration and local employment. The villages of Khasurmik, with 32 households in the survey, and Daltir, with 70, represent just under 20% of the total number of households included in the sample. But 70% of the mining migrants from Thalay come from these two villages. A similar, though not as clear-cut picture can be identified within the portering and guide services. 49% of all those employed in the tourist trade come from these two villages. This is in stark contrast to the village of Burdas in southern Thalay where only one respondent was involved in portering, and none in coal mining.

The village of Khasurmik presents perhaps the most clear-cut profile. 20 of the households have one or more members going to Khosjab during the winter, typically leaving in November and returning in April or May. 18 households also had members working as porters for trekking tourists and mountaineering expeditions during the summer, and a total of 16 households, or half the village, was engaged in both mining and portering. In many cases it would be the same household member who goes to the coalmines during the winter and go portering during the summers. However, portering is mainly done by younger men, below 30 years of age, whereas

‘retirement age’ for migrants to the coal mines is around 50 years.

Apart from Khasurmik, Broqpa is the only village where more than half the households are involved in one type of seasonal employment, namely the winter migration to Gilgit. This might hardly be surprising, as the population of Broqpa originate from the Gilgit area, ‘*Broqpa*’ (people from wild lands) being the rather derogatory term often used by Baltis when referring to Gilgit.

Most of the villages where local employment are most important – as measured in proportion of households involved – are located in mid-Thalay. More than 25% of all those employed locally derive from the village of Yearkhor – whereas the proportion of respondents coming from Yearkhor was only 16%. One reason given was that the average acreages of farmland commanded by each household in Yearkhor were lower than in the neighbouring villages, and much of that farmland was located in Thalay *broq*. Accordingly, the households in Yearkhor were more likely to have labour ‘to sell’ down valley during the peak of the farming season.

Padangus is, however, the village in Thalay where the highest proportion of households are involved in local employment. Here the reason is that Padangus traditionally is the village of craftsmen, especially masonry workers, who have been in high demand during the past years.

6.4 LONG TERM MIGRATION

Table 6.3 sums up the characteristics of long-term migrant moves involving *Thalaypa*. It distinguishes between individual (male) migrants and male migrants accompanied by household members, typically wife and children, as this often is indicative of the quasi permanent residential move.

There is obviously no correlation between distance and the popularity of a destination. The smallest town in Baltistan, Khapulu, is, at a distance of 40 kilometres, the nearest destination, but it is too small to offer employment opportunities. Instead, it is Gilgit and Skardu that are the most popular destinations in the region.

6.4.1 Residential moves within Baltistan

In terms of the demographic development in Baltistan over the past decades, there would seem to be two areas of considerable growth. One is the urban centre of Skardu, and the other is the Shigar Valley. It should therefore not come as a surprise that residential moves from Thalay to

other locations within Baltistan can be traced in the same two directions.

Fig 6.3 Patterns of long-term migration

	No. of male migrants	Migrating with families
Within Northern Areas		
Khapulu	1	0
Skardu	21	17
Gilgit	20	11
Within Pakistan		
Islamabad	14	5
Rawalpindi	2	0
Lahore	12	1
Peshawar	1	0
Karachi ¹⁾	46	14
Abroad		
Iran	1	0
Saudi Arabia	2	0
Army personnel	34	

Source: Survey over 491 households, carried out 1998-2000.

1) The figures listed here for the Karachi migrants do not correspond with the ones given in chapter seven. These figures are based only on the survey, whereas those presented in chapter seven represent the total population of *Thalaypa* in Karachi.

Shigar

For villagers from especially Upper Thalay, access to Shigar, via Thalay lah, has historically been easier than access to Skardu. Whereas *Thalaypa* have been less involved in seasonal migration to Shigar, as elaborated earlier, there would seem to be a pattern of quasi permanent moves to Shigar

Residential moves from Thalay to Shigar are closely linked to investments in farmland in Shigar, some of which can be traced back to the mid-20th century. Arable land is plentiful in Shigar, and most habitations are located at a lower altitude, with an abundance of trees. According to Hajji Ghulam Hussein⁷⁵, who had settled in Shigar in the late 1970s, a total of 12 households – roughly 10% of the total population in Daltir – had moved to Shigar over the years. In the mid-1970s, Ghulam Hussein had worked for a couple of years in the marble mines at Makran in the southern part of Balouchistan, still a well-known destination for migrants from Baltistan. He had then

⁷⁵ Annexe 1, # 32.

invested his savings from that stay in land in Shigar. By 2000, he owned 65 *kanals* farmland, an acreage equivalent to the biggest landholdings in Thalay. Whereas Ghulam Hussein still owned land in Thalay, he had left it to his brothers to farm it. His last visit to Thalay dated back to 1995, when he brought his mother with him to Shigar, to live in his household for two years.

Skardu

Within Baltistan, the growth of Skardu is the most consistent demographic tendency. The population of Skardu more than doubled, to over 26.000, in the inter-censal period 1981-1998, but still only 12.8% of the total population in Baltistan are categorized as urban - the urban population also including Khapulu in Ganche District (Government of Pakistan 2001a). The growth of Skardu can partly be attributed to immigration of administrative and army personnel from lowland Pakistan, as well as traders from other parts of Northern Areas. But a livelihood in Skardu has also become the focus of aspirations for the population in other parts of Baltistan. During the Dogra regime, trade had been the privilege of mainly Hindus and Sikhs, as well as a limited number of Pathans, and the only bazaar of Skardu was known as Kashmiri Bazaar (Dittmann 1997: 125). This changed after 1947, as Kashmiri Bazaar was renamed *Puranah* (old) Bazaar, and refugees from Kargil set up businesses in *Mohajir* (refugee) Bazaar. Since then, and especially in the aftermath of the construction of the Indus Valley Road, the bazaar area has increased vastly, and it is increasingly Baltis who have set up business. In 1995, only 12 out of 83 shops in the Puranah Bazaar belonged to traders who did not originate from Baltistan (Dittmann 1997: 120).

21 migrants from Thalay were by 1999 living in Skardu on a quasi-permanent basis, apart from many more whose presence in the town were motivated by seasonal employment opportunities or the pursuit of college education. 17 of the long term residents had brought their families to Skardu, and most of these had also bought property, in most cases only a plot where they intended to build a house. Others were preparing a move. Property had been bought, but the move had not been completed yet.

The buzz word had increasingly become ‘business’, and business is mainly understood as shop keeping. A total of six shops run by *Thalaypa* had been established in Skardu during the 1990s, and half of these shops were owned by retired army personnel who directly upon retirement had moved their families to Skardu and opened shops there (see text box 6.1)⁷⁶. The capital for the

⁷⁶ Setting up a shop would seem a popular way of investing a surplus, as Stöber notes: “In meiner Stichprobe hatten von 18 Haushalten mit einem pensionierten Soldaten immerhin acht Gemischtwarenläden gegründet (Stöber 2001:

other three shops derived from savings made during migration to respectively The Middle East, Karachi, and Gilgit.

Text box 6.1

Hajji Ibrahim from the village of Burdas was the first *Thalaypa* to establish a shop, Thalay General Store, in Skardu in 1992. After 24 years in the army, he retired in 1991, receiving a pension of 253,000 rupees. He moved to Skardu with his family the following year, and he lives with his wife and seven children in a rented house, paying a monthly rent of 300 rupees. He claims that it was mainly the education of his children that motivated the move to Skardu. His oldest son, aged 15, has gained admission to the army college in Gilgit where his father wants him to pass F.Sc. and become a Commissioned Officer. Another son is attending the Army Public School in Skardu.

Ibrahim has rented the shop he is running. Due to its very central location, the rent has been increasing steadily, from 900 rupees per month in 1992 to 2500 rupees in 1999. He is less informative as to the profits he makes from the shop, but among other of the Thalay shops annual profits of 40,000-50,000 rupees are normal.

Ibrahim visits Thalay once a year. The five *kanals*, which constitute his share of the ancestral property, are farmed by his brother on a sharecropping basis, so that Ibrahim gets 50% of the harvested crop. Ibrahim cites economic reasons for not selling his land in Thalay. By now landed property costs more in Skardu than in Thalay, so it would be bad business to sell the land in Thalay in order to buy in Skardu (annexe 1, # 31).

Ibrahim's story was similar to the one told by a number of the migrants who had left Thalay on a quasi permanent basis, referring to the education of their children as a major motivational factor. The land in Thalay was farmed by relatives, and the 50-50 division of the harvest was the normal deal, with the understanding that the one who undertook the farming also would keep the crop residues.

In summary, the quasi permanent residential move from Thalay to Shigar and Skardu would seem conditioned by the accumulation of financial assets and/or the pursuing of employment opportunities. Those who migrate would not seem to have not been 'pushed' into the move as a result of needs and deprivation. So the capital, which the property in Thalay constitutes, has not been realized in order to move to Skardu. The territorial base in Thalay has been left behind, or at least been left for relatives to look after. But it has not been sold in order to finance the business

189). English translation: In my sample, eight out of 18 households with a retired soldier had established a grocery store (translated by author).

venture in Skardu or the investment in land in Shigar.

6.4.2 Down country

Apart from the seasonal migrants heading for the coal mining area in Khosjab, migration out of the Northern Areas is normally a long term move – or rather, the cyclical aspect characterising the seasonal move is absent. Like most patterns of migration in Pakistan, the direction is almost exclusively rural-urban, with Karachi as the most popular destination.

Most migrants are single when they leave Thalay, and the marriage-conditioned return is an aspect of most migrant trajectories (see text box 6.2), as will be discussed in more detail in chapter eight. All over, the proportion of long-term migrants, who live outside Thalay with their families, is considerably lower outside the Northern Areas than in Skardu and Gilgit. Many migrants expressed the wish to relocate their families to Islamabad or Karachi, but they referred to the costs of living, and especially housing, as the main obstacle (though the composition of the parental household was also an important factor (text box 6.2). Of the five migrants, who had settled in Islamabad with their families, three were government servants and thus eligible to favourable housing arrangements.

An implication of the high costs of living in Islamabad is that religion and economic necessity converge. As has been mentioned in chapter two, Nurbakshiyya constitutes one of the smaller Islamic Sufi sects, with very few followers outside the southern part of Baltistan⁷⁷. Accordingly the main reference point for *Thalaypa* in Islamabad is the Nurbakshi mosque that was constructed during the rule of Zia Ul Haq (1977-88). Whereas it is obviously a place of religious reference, the mosque also serves as a residence for single male migrants living in Islamabad. A total of eight rooms are attached to the mosque, and they are all used as dormitories by Balti migrants, who share expenses on rent and food.

For other Thalay migrants in Islamabad, the meaning of stepwise migration has been redefined. Whereas the stepwise move would be one that gradually takes the migrant further away from his point of departure, the initial step is often the one that takes the migrant to Karachi, almost the longest possible distance within the borders of Pakistan. The move back to Islamabad then happens later, upon the completion of education or different kinds of job training. Kasim Laplappa (text box 6.2) is one of the established migrants in Islamabad, who started out by

⁷⁷ Outside Baltistan, there are Noorbakshi mosques in Gilgit, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Multan, Khosjab, and ‘War Factory’ – a factory complex near Rawalpindi.

moving to Karachi. Job-wise he is anchored in the city, but his family resides in Thalay.

Textbox 6.2

In 1983, at the age of 18, Kasim left his village of Burdas and went to Karachi. As he failed in school, he said, he could just as well go down country. Here he worked for four years as a carpenter apprentice. But he envied some of his friends, who were house servants, because of their nice, ironed clothes, so in 1988 he decided to change trade and become a house servant. The salary was much lower, but as he was living in the same house as his masters, he got all that he needed from them.

In 1991 a doctor told Kasim that he was suffering from allergy, and that he had to move to a drier, cleaner environment. This motivated his move to Islamabad where for eight years he has been driver for a private family. He was married back in Thalay in 1994, and his wife and two children reside in his father's household in Burdas. He maintains that his reason for not taking his wife to Islamabad is that in that case there would be no other women, except his mother, in the household.

Kasim visits Thalay once every year. On his return, he accompanies boys, aged 7-11 years, from Burdas to Islamabad. He finds them work as house servants and playmates in well-off households. For this, he admits that he gets 600-700 rupees from the parents of each boy. Alternatively money is deducted from the salary of the boys. Kasim says that he has managed to secure job positions in Islamabad for seven to eight boys from Burdas (annexe 1, # 14)

Altogether, Burdas may be the village in Thalay that has the most well-established networks outside the valley. A total of 13 single migrants from Burdas, as well as one family, including the boys, live in Islamabad on a quasi permanent basis. The village is also solidly rooted in Karachi. Here a total of 15 *Burdaspa* stay, many of them in the house of a fellow villager, who has got his own house in Abessinia Lines, the oldest Balti neighbourhood in Karachi⁷⁸. The system of 'trafficking' young migrants is not seen anywhere else in Thalay. As the next chapters will elaborate, it is not unusual that boys leave Thalay at an early age, but the move is usually only feasible if a kin member is established in the point of destination. Accordingly, it would not be a move away from home, but rather between two related family units.

6.4.3 International migration

The number of migrants from Thalay who have actually gone abroad is relatively small. Almost all of these have been parts of the flow of labour migrants from Pakistan to the Persian Gulf. As

⁷⁸ See chapter eight for the story of Ibrahim Shahid.

has been elaborated previously, only very specific areas benefit from the remittance economy⁷⁹, and the impact of overseas migration in Thalay is rather negligible. Just five men from Thalay have made the journey to the Gulf States for working purposes, and only one of these was in 2000 living in Thalay on a permanent basis.

6.5 The spatial orientation of livelihoods in Thalay

Whereas the previous chapter demonstrated how livelihoods in Thalay have come to depend on resources from outside the valley, this chapter has aimed to identify and analyse the most important migration practices, whereby the male population in Thalay pursues these resources. This demonstrates one dimension of the ways whereby the local population in Thalay makes use of the territorialisation process and incorporates it in their livelihoods. The territorialisation process has – through the provision of relative regional stability and the construction of roads – provided *Thalaypa* with secure access to geographical areas, where they can exchange their labour for financial assets – and eventually food – at a time of the year when such exchanges cannot take place in their native area.

It must also be emphasised that labour migration from Thalay can be traced back to before the northern mountain region became part of Pakistan. The territorialisation process whereby the Dogra regime subordinated Baltistan served to demarcate the geographical area where migration could go on, and the strictness of Dogra rule would seem to have provided a perverse incentive, motivating young men to leave Baltistan. So Simla, the emerging summer capital of British India, could be said to have characteristics similar to those of present-day Gilgit – an accessible, rapidly growing administrative hub, attracting labourers from a large catchment area. Though the actual numbers remain uncertain, migrants would have been going from Thalay to Simla from at least the 1880s up to Partition in 1947.

The emphasis of this chapter has been on seasonal migration practices which ‘fit into’ the domestic needs at household level. But, as the evidence from Skardu suggests, it is important to stress that migration practices are considerably more diversified than that. This diversity includes individual moves, which are much more open-ended in terms of the duration of the migration, the

⁷⁹ In Baltistan, the village of Mehdiabad is the most well-known example. In the late 1960s contacts were established between village elders and a leading business magnate from Saudi Arabia, and this has resulted in a flow of labour migrants from Mehdiabad to Saudi Arabia ever since (Farman 2000). In 1986 Magrath described the village as exceptionally wealthy and developed [...] where landholdings are small but rates of wage employment high” (Magrath 1986:3). In 2000 510 migrants from Mehdiabad, or almost two persons from each household, were working in Saudi Arabia (Farman 2000).

eventual outcome, and the time frame. Such moves will be subjected to much more detailed analysis in the next chapters dealing with migration to Karachi. Long-term migration also includes the residential moves of entire nuclear units, as evidenced by the data from Skardu. Here it must again be emphasized that these are moves, which are conditioned by the accumulation of financial resources as well as the awareness of alternative livelihood opportunities outside Thalay.

Chapter seven

Balti migrants in Karachi

7.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the defining properties of the Balti migrant community in Karachi as it has evolved within the context of economic and political development, which has characterised the city since Partition in 1947⁸⁰. This chapter does thereby, together with the following one, aim to establish an understanding of the ways in which the ‘larger story’ in the urban context serves to condition the smaller one, which concerns the activities of the Thalay migrants, who live in Karachi.

The focus on Karachi is not coincidental. Though it is not supported by official figures⁸¹, Karachi constitutes the biggest outlet for migrants from Baltistan. According to estimates, around 20,000-25,000 Baltis, or 6-8% of the Balti population, live here on a long term basis – a number that swells every winter, as a few thousand flee the cold in Baltistan.

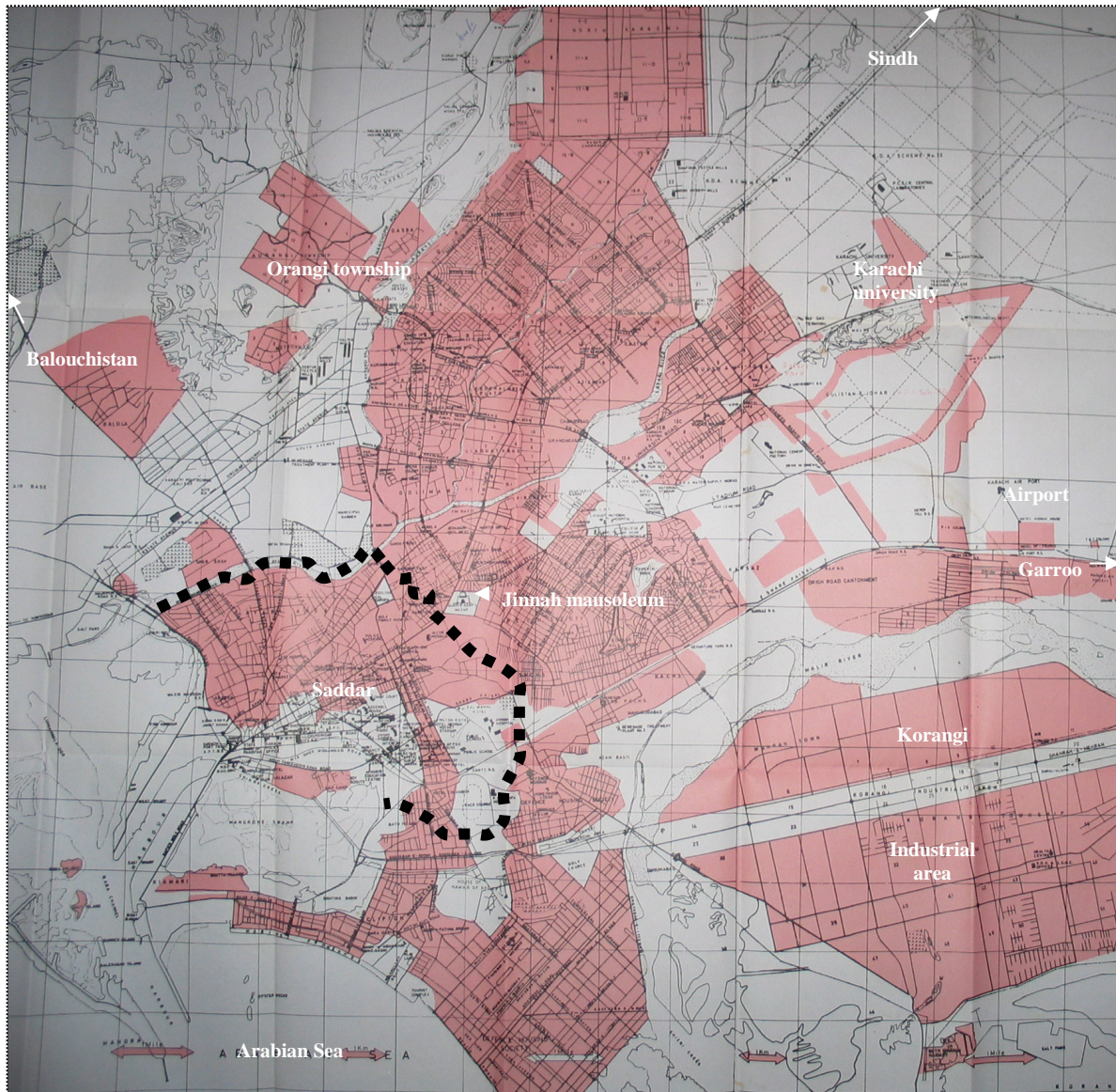
This chapter is divided into two sections. The first focuses on demographic, political and ethnical dimensions of the development the city has undergone, with particular emphasis on the period

⁸⁰ For more detailed discussions of this period, please refer to Hasan 1999, Verkaaik 1994, Gayer 2003.

⁸¹ Census figures on migration operate with the Northern Areas as one unit (Government of Pakistan 1998, and it is thus not possible to single out migrant numbers from districts or *tehsils* in Baltistan.

since 1947. With this overall development as a backdrop, the second section will identify the most important characteristics of Balti migrants in Karachi.

Map 7.1 Karachi – the evolving metropolis



↑ (variations in scale, indicated on map)

Source: Karachi Development Authority 1985.

Note: Shaded areas denote parts of the city which were characterised as residential in 1985.

---: Approximate extent of the city of Karachi in 1947.

7.1 Karachi – historical development

“You will be the glory of the East; would that I could come again to see you, Karachi, in your grandeur” (in Huttenback 1962). Hopes were high in 1843 when Sir Charles Napier captured Karachi, the sleepy port at the mouth of the Indus. The motivations for taking the town, as in fact the entire Sindh, were obvious, as Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, wrote: “If I can open channels of commerce to Central Asia and if I can make the Indus the thoroughfare for navigation, that gold and silver road...which it ought to be, I shall not care much else” (ibid). These visions were eventually shelved as the Indus proved very difficult to navigate, but Karachi nevertheless developed into the major port for the Western part of British India, emerging as the largest exporter of cotton and wheat from the Punjab. Railways were constructed in the 1860s, and the population increased rapidly, from 14,000 in 1838 to 73,000 in 1881.

By the time of Partition in 1947, the population had increased to over 400,000, but in the following three to four years it tripled due to the stream of *Mohajirs*, Muslim migrants from India, a large proportion of whom settled in Karachi. Besides forever doing away with Karachi’s image as the cleanest, most orderly city on the Indian subcontinent, the ethnic and religious composition changed completely. Whereas more than half the population before Partition had been Hindus, Karachi was 96% Muslim in 1951, and Urdu was replacing Sindhi, the native tongue, as the most spoken language. This linguistic distribution of the population remains a characteristic of the city, and in the 1998 census 48.5% of Karachi’s population had Urdu as their mother tongue, while only 7.2% were Sindhi speakers (Government of Pakistan 1999)⁸².

Karachi became the temporary capital of the new state, and a central administration had to be established. One implication of this was that the *Mohajirs* were ‘catapulted’ into command, by virtue of language and educational standards. As many of the *Mohajirs* were ‘modern’ and urbanised, and their language, Urdu, became the national language of Pakistan, indigenous Sindhis were left at a disadvantage. Predominantly rurally based, and with lower educational levels, the Sindhis became marginalised in Karachi, even more so when Karachi was made capital of Pakistan in May 1948, and the Constituent Assembly decided to make it a federally administered area, controlled by the central government rather than the province of Sindh. The most important implications of this were the abolition of Sindhi within Karachi’s federal offices, the replacement of Sindhi-speaking office workers, and the closure of the Sindhi Department at the University of Karachi (Sardar Ali and Rehman 2001: 108). The ensuing tensions between Sindhi and *Mohajir* population groups have remained a defining and often disruptive element of

⁸² As opposed to the national level where just 8% of the population had Urdu as their mother tongue at the population census in 1998 (Government of Pakistan 1999).

Karachi's political scene⁸³, resulting in the establishment of the initially student-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in 1984, which swept into power in Karachi and the rest of urban Sindh in 1987⁸⁴. The next ten years were dominated by frequent and violent confrontations between especially MQM and other ethnic groups, especially Sindhis. But stricter law and order enforcement has since the late 1990s served to stabilise the situation.

Apart from continued ethnic tensions, Karachi has since the mid-1990s been affected by sectarian violence, in particular the escalating tensions between Sunni and Shi'i fractions. By 2000 there were few open confrontations, partly as mosques were heavily guarded, and instead a pattern was evolving where individual Shi'i 'professionals' (doctors, lawyers, etc) and front figures of the Shi'i community were targeted by extremist Sunni groups (Gayer 2003: 17).

7.1.1 Mother of the poor

The extremely high population growth, which characterised Karachi just after Partition, has continued. Between 1951 and 1972 the population increased by more than 200%, to 3.4 million, thereby outgrowing the first of many master plans for the development of Karachi. According to this, developed in the late 1950s, the city would not pass the three million mark until the turn of the century (Hasan 1999: 25), but by 2000 the city had in fact grown to beyond 10 million.

At the time of Partition, Karachi was the only major port of West Pakistan, and most industrial development in the country took place around the city. Whereas the flow of *Mohajirs* from India eventually decreased, labour migrants from all over Pakistan kept moving to the city (Selier 1988), depicted in folk songs as a distant city of dreams and promises of wealth (Talbot 1998)⁸⁵, home to one tenth of the total world Balouch population and known as the "biggest Pushtun city in the world", due to the influx of Afghan refugees during especially the 1980s (Talbot 1998: 45).

⁸³ The distribution of power shifted again when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came into power in 1972, and Mumtaz Bhutto, a cousin of the prime minister, became chief minister. An attempt to institute Sindhi as the official language in the entire province provoked the Mohajirs to riot, ultimately forcing the provincial government not only to amend the legislation to make both Sindhi and Urdu the official languages, but also to provide a grace period of 12 years for non-Sindhis to learn Sindhi (Mumtaz 1990, Sardar Ali and Rehman 2001)⁸³. Furthermore, the quotas introduced by Bhutto – whereby Sindh was divided into respectively a rural and an urban region – were made in order to improve Sindhi representation within the civil service.

⁸⁴ The MQM has later suffered from internal strife and disagreement concerning the overall direction of the movement, with a new faction advocating the liberation of Karachi and Hyderabad through armed struggle (Gayer 2003: 16).

⁸⁵ "*Guddi holay holay chala, lumba safar Karachi da*" ("drive the train slowly for the journey to Karachi is a long one"), as one folk song went (Talbot 1998: 43).

Table 7.1 Population development in Karachi

Year	Population	Average annual increase (%)
1856	56,875	x
1901	136,297	3.2
1941	435,887	5.5
1951	1,068,459	14.5
1961	1,912,598	7.9
1971	3,426,310	9.4
1981	5,208,132	5.2
1998	9,269,265	4.3
2006 ¹	11,969,284	3.6

Source: Hasan 1999

1) Estimate.

Among migrants Karachi became, and still is, known as ‘Mother of the Poor’, attracting people from not just all Pakistan, but over the years also from different parts of South Asia, especially Bangladesh (after the break away of 1971) and Afghanistan, after 1980. According to the 1981 census around 80% of all Karachiites older than 29 years were born outside the city, and in the late 1980s it was estimated that of the approximately 550,000 new inhabitants constituting the annual growth of the city, 250,000 were migrants (Selier 1988). At the same time, and as a consequence of the massive immigration to the city since 1947, a generation was in the making which was born in the city. In 1987, almost 36% of Karachi’s population were 14-30 years old, and 80% of these were born in the city. 71% of them were literate, as compared to the overall Pakistan figure of 26%, and within the group 28% had passed their matriculation (Gayer 2003: 17).

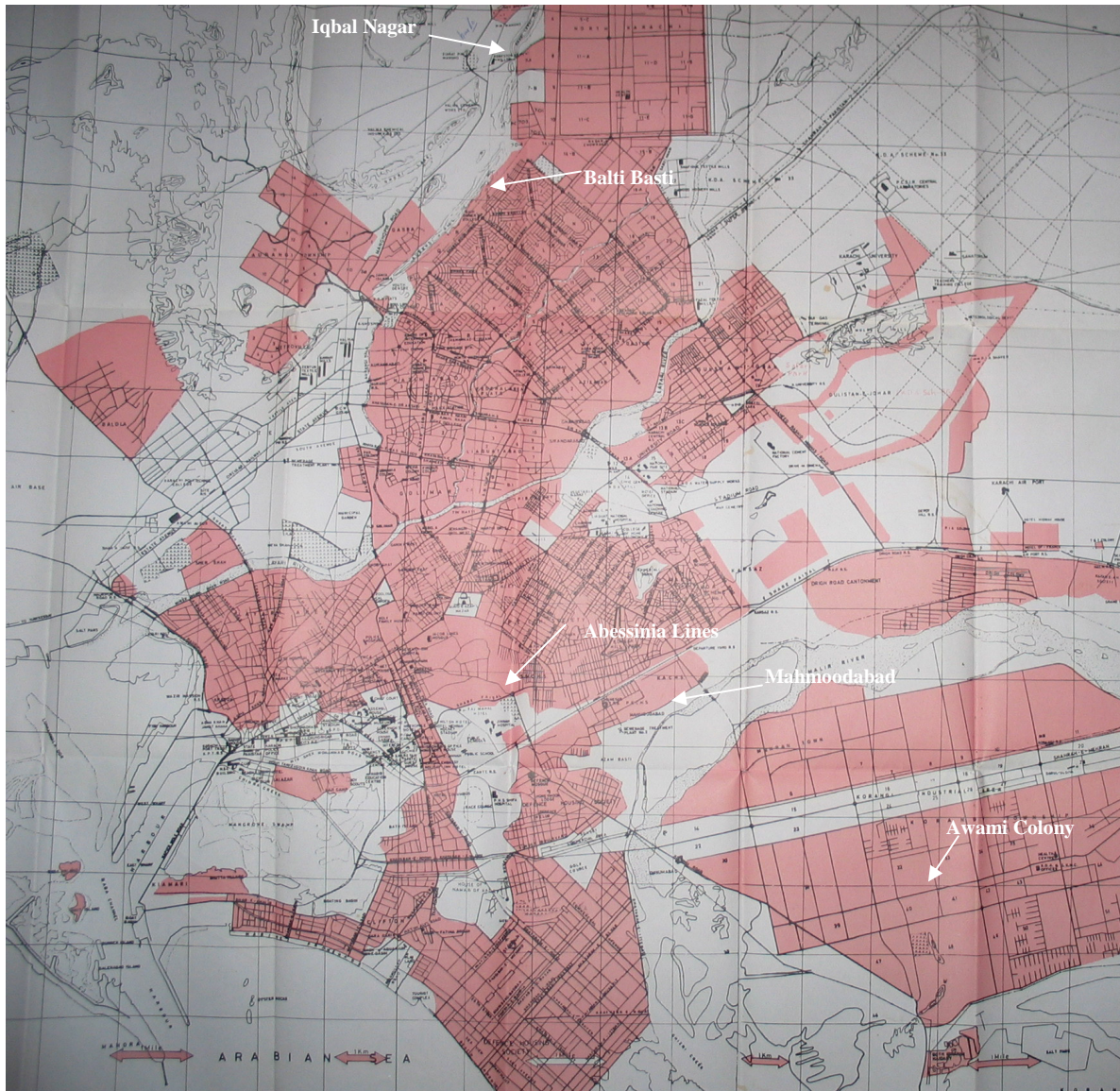
7.2 Balti migrants in Karachi

Strictly speaking, the first Balti migrants to arrive in Karachi could also be categorized as *Mohajirs*. They were Muslims, and they happened to become refugees, as they were living on the wrong side of the border that was drawn in August 1947. They came from Simla, the summer capital of the British Raj, and the refugees comprised both a residential population of perhaps 3-4,000 Baltis and temporary labour migrants, working in Simla for periods of two to three years.

In the autumn of 1947 the routes linking Baltistan and the Himalayan foothills were severed due to the conflict over Kashmir. The Baltis, who lived in Simla, were given 24 hours to leave by train. They had to give up most of their belongings, and many were killed in the journey through

the Punjab. Those who survived stayed at Walton Camp, a transition camp outside Lahore. From here the refugees could choose either to return to Baltistan, or go elsewhere⁸⁶.

Map 7.2 Balti Mohallahs in Karachi



Source: Karachi Development Authority 1985.

⁸⁶ Annexe 2, #34.

By 2000, Abessinia Lines had become a densely populated area of central Karachi, located just two kilometres from Sadaar. The *Balti mohallah*, populated only by Baltis, constituted a distinct part of Abessinia Lines, dominated by attached, two-three storey concrete buildings. Very congested, the *mohallah* was crisscrossed by narrow pathways rather than roads. As a long term resident of Abessinia Lines put it: “Here we do not feel that we are not in our own village” (annexe 2, #35). As opposed to other parts of Abessinia Lines which were *pakka*, as property owners held title to their land, the *Balti mohallah* remained a *katchi abadi*, its legal status unresolved.

Besides being a focal point for Baltis in Karachi, on account of being the first settlement, Abessinia Lines also became a religious point of reference for Balti Shi'is in Karachi. Symbolically, the *jami masjid*, Friday mosque, of the Balti Shi'is stands out as the highest building in the *mohallah*.

The transformation of Abessinia Lines into a predominately Balti neighbourhood and its emergence as a centre for Balti Shi'is can be seen as simultaneous processes, which are logically related, as Shi'is constitute the largest Muslim group in Baltistan. But the origin of Mahmoodabad, the second *Balti mohallah* in Karachi, can be seen as clearly religiously determined, as it from the onset was destined to become the Nurbakshi *mohallah*.

The first Balti migrants of the Nurbakshiyya sect lived scattered in different parts of Karachi. Over the years, the Nurbakshis in Karachi pooled resources in order to build a mosque somewhere near the city centre. They chose to build in Mahmoodabad, at that time an unattractive area located close to the river running through Karachi. As Haider, one of the founders of the mosque, said: “It was the first building in Mahmoodabad. All the area from Jinnah Hospital to here was jungle”.⁸⁷ Mahmoodabad, at that time largely unsettled, is located a few km north of Abessinia Lines. At the time, in 1964, the area was of no interest to the local authorities, “jungle” being a local epithet for uncleared land. By 2000, an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 Baltis, mainly Nurbakshis, were living in Mahmoodabad. At the same time, however, it might be wrong to consider Mahmoodabad a ‘pure’ Balti ghetto. The presence of a Sunni mosque, located directly opposite the Nurbakshi mosque, would seem to testify to the limited powers of a small minority.

⁸⁷ It may not be entirely coincidental that the first building to be built in Mahmoodabad was a mosque. In Pakistan the construction of mosques on vacant land, especially in cities, is often seen as a way of appropriating land. So the act of land grabbing, supported by a religious committee, takes on a religious legitimacy, which makes it difficult for local authorities to challenge it.

The emergence of further Balti *mohallahs* was a consequence of planning and opportunity. As a result of the Greater Karachi Resettlement Plan, initiated in 1958, two satellite towns were planned, Landhi-Korangi to the east and New Karachi to the north. Both are located at distances of approximately 25 kilometres from the city centre, and industrial estates were developed as part of the satellite towns (Hasan 1999: 26). Furthermore, inner city refugee and squatter settlements were bulldozed, and it became impossible to build new squatter settlements within the metropolitan area.

Iqbal Nagar, a Balti settlement 20 kilometres north of Saadar, gradually came into being in 1971, indirectly as a consequence of the industrial developments. The *mohallah* is located in the part of Karachi where there is no longer a road network, but just one pothole ridden road, stretching northwards through barren land. Rather than a neighbourhood in a metropolis, Iqbal Nagar could seem like a village in the desert, cattle herds on its outskirts rather than garbage dumps. In the late 1960s, a group of Balti labourers encroached on land adjacent to the government-owned Javedan cement factory where they were working. They built huts and sheds on the wasteland, but it was, according to one of the first settlers⁸⁸, not until the early 1970s, due to the intervention of the then prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, that the squatters were granted ownership over the land they were occupying. So the *katchi abadi* was legitimized, electricity lines and water connections were established, and the settlement gradually developed into a *mohallah* consisting of approximately 150 houses, mostly single storey concrete buildings, and all of them inhabited by Baltis.

A similar story can be told for Awami Colony, located in Korangi, east of Saadar. Another industrial area, it was settled in the mid-1960s, and by 2000 there were over 300 Balti households in the area. The Balti Basti, located on slopes north of the city, is the last of the distinctly Balti *mohallahs* in Karachi. The *mohallah* was founded in 1968, when three Balti migrants bought land from Pathans living nearby. Afterwards 12 more settled, and when there were 24 houses, they built a mosque. By 2000 there were 350 Balti houses in the *mohallah*.

7.2.2 The *chapar*

As would appear from the above, the spatial distribution of Balti migrants in Karachi is, at least to some extent, characterised by the allocation of migrants in specific neighbourhoods,

⁸⁸ Annexe 2, # 36.

determined through coincidence, religious affiliation, and industrial development. But in relation to the social organisation of the Balti migrant population, it is the *chapar*, or village house, which stands out as a specific, well-defined point of reference for a group of migrants originating from the same area, usually a village of a cluster of villages.

In most cases the *chapar* consisted of a rented flat, comprising a couple of rooms, always doubling as living rooms and bed rooms, as well as a kitchen and a bathroom. 12 to 15 young men would share the rooms, the occupancy loosely defined according to the activities, which the residents engaged in. Accordingly the students would occupy one room, and the non-students another, the major distinguishing feature often being the presence of a worn out TV set in the room of the non-students. At night both rooms would convert into dormitories. Each resident would typically have a padlocked bag or, for long term residents, a small, also padlocked metal trunk for private belongings.

For the newly arrived migrant from Baltistan, the *chapar* of his village is a starting point, supplying food and accommodation while he finds employment. This does not, however, imply that it is only a temporary shelter, but rather that the continued residence of the migrant is seen to depend on his trajectory in Karachi. Typically the students, who depend on part-time jobs, will be staying for longer, and periods of five to eight years are not uncommon. Expenses for food, rent and electricity are shared, and the average monthly expense would be 1,200 to 1,500 rupees, depending on the location of the *chapar* and the number of residents living there. For most it would be a sum equivalent to one third of a monthly wage.

For the long term Balti resident in Karachi, the *chapar* remains a focal point, but with a social rather than a residential function. News from the native area is dispersed via the *chapar*, and meetings in the welfare organisation also take place here. The 'Village Welfare Organization' is an organization established by migrants from the specific village, and it would normally comprise all male migrants from that village who reside in Karachi on a long term basis. Whereas it was always stressed that the organizations are not officially registered with the authorities, their organisational hierarchies are worthy of larger organizations. The village welfare organisation is usually headed by a general secretary and/or a president, who presides over a cabinet. Each member of the *chapar* contributes a small monthly sum, usually five to ten rupees, and the members would typically meet once every couple of months.

As a functional unit, the *chapar* is not unique. In the context of urban migrants in Pakistan, the *dera* is a very similar arrangement, offering food and accommodation to single men who often,

but not always, originate from the same village (Selier 1988: 67, van Pinxteren 1974: 4). The purpose can be described as dual. From the view point of the individual migrant it is a cost efficient means of accommodation. At the same time it gives the newcomer an advantage, as he does not have to pay for lodging immediately, but is given 'credit' until he finds employment. In one of the Balti *chapars* some of the permanent residents said with a sly smile that sometimes the newcomer would leave immediately after finding work, forgetting to pay for his lodging.

Furthermore, it can be argued that co-habitation also implies a degree of collective control over the individual, whose "singleness" is seen as deviant. As Selier comments on the issue of single men: "In general, their presence in Bastis is not appreciated because they deviate from the norm of living 'within' a proper family" (Selier 1988: 67). In his ethnography from a *mohallah* in Karachi, Streefland also points out that "...single men living alone are seen as a threat to women" (Streefland 1979: 182).

7.2.3 Baltistan Student Federation

The Baltistan Student Federation (BSF) was founded in Karachi in 1986 by a number of university students. Though there were several religious preachers among the founding members, BSF is not a sectarian organisation, and it does, as opposed to many other student organisations in Karachi, not have links to political parties. In the beginning there were 350 members, a number growing to more than 1,500 in the mid-1990s, before declining to approximately 900 in 2000.

It was the claim for recognition of Baltistan as part of Pakistan that was central when BSF was founded. Activities were started in Skardu in 1987, with posters and wall chalking, and a campaign was started against the issuance of domicile certificates to non-residents and non-local people. The claim for recognition has remained a central doctrine, and a week after the 'Golden Jubilee' in August 1997, celebrating 50 years of Pakistani independence, BSF organised a 'black day' to protest that Baltis were still denied constitutional rights (Khan 1998: 15-16). Since then relations to the Pakistani state have deteriorated further, and some BSF leaders have questioned the status of Baltistan as part of Pakistan and brought forward alternative solutions to the Kashmir conflict.

7.3 A Balti community?

Is there altogether a Balti community in Karachi?

As most Baltis in Karachi live in one of the five Balti *mohallahs*, they altogether reflect a residential pattern, which is characteristic of the city, namely allocation along ethnic and religious lines. But it is difficult to speak of a Balti community, as there are no organisational structures linking neither the different Balti *mohallahs* nor the Balti migrants living in the different parts of the city.

Both the *chapar* and the religious community constitute established points of reference, which build on aspects of social order that can be identified in the village communities in Baltistan, which the migrants derive from. The *chapar* and, by extension, the village welfare organisation constitutes both a representation of and a link to the village community back home in Baltistan, channelling information flows to and from the village. The religious community, which the migrant belongs to, might take on greater significance in the urban context, as basically all Balti migrants in Karachi belong to Islamic groups that are minorities in the national context – Shi'is and Nurbakshis.

Altogether, the role of the BSF may not be seen as a very concrete and tangible one. BSF is not a strong actor on the political scene in Karachi, standing outside alliances with political parties. BSF rather represents an understanding of Baltistan, which evolves outside Baltistan. The irony would be that it is an understanding, which emerges among students, who come to Karachi in order to pursue government secular education and eventually end up challenging the territorialisation strategies pursued by Pakistani governments, more explicitly the role given to the Northern Areas in relation to the Kashmir cause.

Chapter eight

Thalaypa in Karachi

8.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the livelihoods of migrants from Thalay, who live in Karachi. Where the previous chapter developed a broader understanding of the Balti migrant community in relation to the overall political and economic development in the city, the intention here is to focus more on migration as an individual process, evolving in relation to both the urban, ‘Pakistani’ context and the constraints of a multi-placed social unit. Accordingly, this chapter again operates at the level of the ‘little story’. By analysing the trajectories of 32 Thalay migrants in Karachi and eight migrants who have returned from Karachi to Thalay, it explores how individual livelihoods are structured within the context provided by the ‘larger’ story of territorialisation and urbanisation.

The ‘little story’ is in this chapter also a ‘long’ one, as it aims to capture how the migrant trajectory evolves over time. Underlying this aim is the intent to examine what has previously been characterised as a ‘problem of order’ in migration, arising as members of a social system are placed in different locations, thus operating in different action contexts. The migrant *duree* is in this context ‘set’ in Karachi, comprising the livelihood activities, which the migrant is involved in. The *longue duree* comprises a set of institutionalised practices and jointly held understandings. It is not spatially delimited, but it has evolved in a context of co-presence in

village communities in Thalay. As the action context, which the migrant in Karachi operates in, would seem significantly different from the one he comes from, providing different types of opportunities and constraints, the question is how this affects his trajectory in Karachi and the nature of his relations with the rest of his social system.

8.1 Residential pattern

The history of migration from Thalay to Karachi is not quite as old as the Balti community in the city, and there were no Thalay families among the Simla migrants who settled here. The earliest arrival, whom I had a chance to meet, was a villager from Hadangus who had first migrated to Karachi in the early 1960s. Upon the death of his father, he had decided to move the entire family to Garroo, 50 kilometres east of Karachi. He estimated that at that time approximately 15 migrants from Thalay, all single men, were living in the city (annexe 2, # 21).

Since then the number has been increasing slowly before evening out. By 1994 there were around 65 *Thalaypa* in Karachi, and in early 2001 there were, according to the records of the Thalay Welfare Organisation, 62 migrants from Thalay in the city, 22 of whom were living in Karachi with their nuclear families. Accordingly the total number of quasi resident *Thalaypa* was an estimated 130⁸⁹, at 2.8% a proportion of the total population that is considerably lower than the proportion of Baltis assumed to be living in Karachi (6-8%). Not surprisingly, the distribution of *Thalaypa* in Karachi is to a large extent linked to the Balti *mohallahs*, where 73% are residing. By far the majority of these, 63%, live in Abessinia Lines and Mahmoodabad, the two most centrally located neighbourhoods. Mango Pir, located far to the north, is home to just under 10% of migrants from Thalay.

Table 8.1 demonstrates another aspect of the residential pattern, namely the distribution of migrants according to the villages in Thalay they derive from. The number of migrants from each village varies considerably, also in terms of the migrant/household ratio. Some of the villages with comparatively high numbers of migrants – for example Baltoro and Yearkhor – have a history of migration dating back to the 1960s (annexe 2, #23, 25). It is significant that there are no migrants in Karachi from the two villages in Upper Thalay, Khasurmik and Ludas, and from Padangus. As mentioned previously, Khasurmik is the village that has the most well-developed pattern of seasonal migration, both summer and winter, but hardly any links to lowland Pakistan

⁸⁹ Based on an estimated average of four members of each nuclear unit.

have been established. Padangus is known as the village of craftsmen and construction workers, who are more likely to find work locally as well as in Gilgit on a seasonal basis, and only one man from Padangus has completed an educational trajectory in Karachi (annexe 1, # 12)⁹⁰.

Table 8.1 Thalay migrants in Karachi 2001, by village

	Male migrants	Migrants/ household
Khasurmik	0	0
Ludas	0	0
Daltir	8	0.11
Broqpa	2	0.08
Baltoro	10	0.15
Tagary	5	0.14
Yearkhor	12	0.14
Chundo	2	0.08
Gagoderik	4	0.16
Tasso	1	na
Hadangus	7	0.22
Padangus	0	0
Burdas	12	0.22
Total	62	0.13

Source: Records of Thalay Welfare Organisation.

8.1.2 Welfare organisation and *chapar*

The founding of the Thalay Welfare Organisation in Karachi was closely linked to the construction of a Thalay *chapar* in the city in the early 1980s. The need for a *chapar* was realized by migrants from Thalay, who were living in Karachi around 1980. As explained by the then president of the Thalay Welfare Organisation:

“A man from Thalay was dying here in Karachi. He had no relatives here, we had nowhere to take him, so he died at the Nurbakshi mosque [...] It was shame for us. After the funeral we decided to collect money to build a house”.

There were at that time between 30 and 35 *Thalaypa* living in Karachi. They collected the money over five years, contributing on a monthly basis, in order to buy a plot and build the house. This finally happened in 1985. As is the case for the *chapars* of all villages in the Khapulu area, the house was built in Manzoor Colony, a neighbourhood that constitutes part of Mahmoodabad.

⁹⁰ Trajectory # 6 in figure 8.2 (this chapter).

The single storey house consists of two living rooms, as in all *chapars* doubling as sleeping rooms, as well as a small kitchen and a bathroom. Like all house units commanding unutilized space, the plot is demarcated by a wall two meters high. In January 2000, when I first visited, eight *Thalaypa* were living in the house, two of them temporary visitors. A year later, the house had ‘moved’. The house in Manzoor Colony had been sublet, and ‘Thalay National House’ now consisted of a rented house unit on the first floor of a house in Abessinia Lines, shared by six migrants. The move had been a matter of convenience, I was told. Abessinia Lines is located more centrally than Manzoor Colony, with Sadaar within walking distance. Work places, colleges and universities were easier to access from Abessinia Lines, and at smaller expense. But there was no talk of giving up the house in Manzoor Colony. On the contrary, at meetings in the Thalay Welfare Organization the members were discussing how to raise the money needed in order to construct more rooms on the plot of the house in Manzoor Colony.

Whereas there is only one ‘official’ *chapar*, owned by *Thalaypa* in Karachi, the dormitory style type of accommodation had been copied by migrants from Thalay living in other parts of the city. A villager from Burdas, living in Karachi with his family, had converted part of his house unit in Abessinia Lines into a dormitory, which in early 2001 was shared by shared by seven young, single migrants from his village (annexe 2, # 4). Likewise, eight migrants from four different villages in Thalay were sharing a flat on the top floor of a *pakka* house in Ghizer Colony.

Altogether approximately one third of the Thalay migrants in Karachi were residing in this type of dormitory-style accommodation, sharing the costs for rent, fuel, and food. The average costs of around 900-1,000 rupees per person per month would for most migrants be equivalent to between one-third and one-fourth of a monthly income.

Though the *chapar* constitutes an accommodation and residence pattern, which is especially suitable for new arrivals in Karachi, it does become a long-term solution for many migrants, especially those in low-paid jobs. Apart from one recent arrival, the rest of the residents of the flat in the Ghizer Colony had been in Karachi between three and ten years.

8.2 The migrant trajectory

Figure 8.1 summarises the trajectories of 32 respondents, who had migrated from Thalay and were still living in Karachi in early 2001. Each trajectory depicts the individual sequence of educational and/or employment-related pursuits.

8.2.1 Motivational factors

The journey to Karachi is mostly a direct one (see table 8.2), only punctuated by transfers in Skardu, Rawalpindi and/or Lahore. The majority of those reaching Karachi via a previous destination had similar itineraries, as they had undergone religious education in Sunni madrassas in the Punjab, usually educational trajectories lasting several years, before going to Karachi (annexe 2, # 2, 7, 12, 16, 18, 20)⁹¹.

Table 8.2 Routes to Karachi

Directly to Karachi	Via previous destination (s)
23	9

Source: 32 Thalay migrants in Karachi

Why go to Karachi? The journey from Thalay to Karachi is possibly the longest distance a Balti can travel within Pakistan. The answer to this question was largely identical whenever I raised it. In Karachi it was far easier to find the part-time employment that can finance the students' stay in the city, and living expenses, especially rent, were said to be lower than in the other cities. Likewise, those who only migrated for work purposes, were also most likely to be going directly to Karachi, as employment opportunities overall were seen to be much better than in other Pakistani cities. Or at least it used to be like that. In early 2001, new arrivals who had been in the city for a couple of months, reported that they were encountering difficulties finding employment.

Table 8.3 Motivations for going to Karachi

Poverty	Education	Employment	Education & employment	Relatives in Karachi
3	11	11	8	11

Source: 32 Thalay migrants in Karachi

Approximately one third of the respondents referred to relatives in Karachi who had supported them during the initial part of their stay in the city. The implication of this was that many of the *Thalaypa* in Karachi belonged to a second generation of migrants, carrying 'the torch of migration', and being supported by a member of the extended family, often an uncle, who was residing in the city. The story told by Ghulam Abbas (text box 8.1) is not an unusual one. With both father and brother well-established in Karachi, it was possible for him to go to Karachi at a

⁹¹ This type of religious education has the added advantage that food and boarding are provided for free in the madrassa. The apparent contradiction that *Thalaypa*, who are Nurbakshi, pursue education at Sunni madrassas, was not a cause for concern. One respondent had, however, ended up converting to *Ahl-I hadith* after six years at a madrassa in Jhelum (annexe 2, #7).

young age.

Textbox 8.1

Ghulam Abbas from the village of Chundo came to Karachi in 1980, at the age of 8. He was going together with his uncle and just managed to cross the path of his father who was returning home to Thalay after having spent 20 years in Karachi. As the uncle one year later went to Saudi Arabia for work purposes, Ghulam Abbas moved to Garoo, east of Karachi, to stay with other relatives. He completed his Matric in 1990, found work in Karachi soon thereafter, and married a girl from Tasso in Thalay in 1998. Ghulam Abbas is not keen on returning to Thalay, as it is difficult to find employment, and he cannot stand the winters, having been away for so long.

(annexe 2, #26)

It is important to emphasize that the initial motivation to migrate in the first place is not necessarily identical to the motivation to stay on, as Anwar's trajectory is an example of (below). Anwar lives in a flat outside the Balti *mohallah* in Abessinia Lines, in a flat he shares with just one other migrant, a Shigari. They are better off than most other Balti migrants, their living room boasting a sofa set as well as a computer. Anwar's professional career seems to have 'overtaken' his educational trajectory and, like many others, he links a possible residential move to a position as government servant.

Textbox 8.2

When Anwar went to Karachi at the age of 11, it was purely for educational purposes, and because he had an uncle living in the city. Now, 14 years later, the uncle has gone home, and Anwar is in the final year of an M.A. in Mass Communication. But he considers his studies a 'hobby', secondary to his work in the fishing business. He goes home once every year in the summer ("Farming is my passion"), but has difficulties seeing a future for himself back in Thalay. A position as government servant in Islamabad might be a more likely future

(annexe 2, #1).

Furthermore, decision-making powers would in some cases seem to have shifted during the period the migrant has been away. Apart from the rather limited number, who had 'ran away', most decisions to migrate had been made or approved by the head of the household in Thalay, usually the father of the migrant. In many cases, the decision to stay on in Karachi, also after the end of the educational trajectory, was the migrant's choice, sometimes in opposition to their fathers (annexe 2, #4,5). As a number of respondents put it: "What is there for me to do there".

8.2.2 Educational trajectories

As established above, education was one of the main motivations for migrating to Karachi. A survey of educational achievements, carried out among the 32 respondents, seemed to confirm this. Out of the migrants from Thalay, 78% had at least passed Matriculation (10th class), 45% had passed F.A. level, or they had advanced even further. Those with more than one education were usually migrants who had first enrolled in religious education at a madrassa, in the Punjab or in Karachi, and then at a later stage had supplemented with a government secular education.

Table 8.4 Educational status of Thalay migrants in Karachi

No edu- cation	Below 10 th class	Matri- culation	FA	BA	MA	> MA	Religious education	Total
5	2	9	3	7	3	3	5	37 ¹

Source: 32 Thalay migrants in Karachi

1) five of the respondents had completed more than one education.

Though the combination of educational facilities and access to employment were referred to by most as the most important reason for going to Karachi, 40% of the respondents had been able to initially focus only on their studies. The average arrival age in this group was lower – 14.4 years compared to 16.7 years for the entire group of migrants – and most migrants in this group had been accommodated by relatives during the initial part of their stay in Karachi.

Unsurprisingly, given the educational levels achieved, the duration of the educational trajectory was considerable. Among the 22 migrants, who were or had been involved in education during their stay in Karachi, the average period of involvement was 7.8 years. Of the respondents, five had not received any education at all, but three of these had migrated to Karachi more than 30 years ago, before education became a key motivation. Two of the migrants without education, who had gone to Karachi in the 1960s, had nevertheless managed to secure jobs as government servants.

Overall, the role of education in relation to the overall migration trajectory was not altogether clear-cut. As Ali, the president of Thalay Welfare Organization, put it in a definitive manner, a bit exasperated after having overheard me pose identical questions to a number of people in the Thalay House:

“You finish studies...you go home...that`s the system.”

Then again, Ali had completed his studies, he had been married the year before, he had a wife

and a baby son installed in his father's big house in Thalay. But Ali was still in Karachi, hesitating to return. And he was by far not the only one. A total 22, or 69%, of the interviewed migrants had been, or were presently, involved in educational pursuits in Karachi. But only seven of these were actually undergoing education in early 2000. That left a total of 15 who would seem to defy the 'system' – or perhaps rather establish a system of their own where employment opportunities would be seen as more important than the obligation to return home.

Table 8.5 Employment pattern of Thalay migrants

	Employment type	Number of migrants
Wet money	Restaurant work	4
	House servant	2
	<i>Chowkidar</i>	1
Dry money	Teaching	4
	Office work	2
	Shop keeping	1
	Fishing industry	2
	Factory employee	4
	Trade	2
	Saudi Arabia	2
	Others	3
	Unemployed	3
	Not working	1
	Retired	1
	Total	32
	Government servants ¹	4
	Active students ²	7

Source: 32 Thalay migrants in Karachi.

- 1) Respondents, who are government servants, are also included in the categories above. One government servant works as a teacher, one as a driver, and two as factory workers for respectively the steel mills and the Oil and Gas Development Corporation.
- 2) Apart from one student, who was not working, the rest are included in the job categories above, as they work part time.

8.2.3 Employment pattern

“Every Balti is a *chowkidar*”, so Ghulam Ali said one day, rather aloof and slightly contradictory, as he himself was not working as *chowkidar*, but was comfortably situated as head waiter in one of the better restaurants in Karachi (annexe 2, # 28). The *chowkidar* is not one specific job position, but it covers a range of functions that can be carried out by an unskilled labourer. The most common job type carried out by the *chowkidar* is that of the watchman.

The job-wise distinction, which many Baltis, especially in low-salary jobs, referred to, was a distinction between “wet money” and “dry money”. The differentiation refers to the types of wages that are paid. “Wet money” comprises employment types where food is included in the pay. It is typically linked to jobs in restaurants or as house servants. ‘Dry money’ includes job categories where salaries are payable in cash only. As table 6.1 suggests, ‘dry money’ was the most common category among the migrants from Thalay.

Nevertheless, Ghulam Ali was proven absolutely wrong. The Thalay migrants worked in a number of different trades, and only one was actually employed as a *chowkidar*. As opposed to some of the other population groups in Karachi, who would monopolise certain trades, the most prevalent feature would seem to be the lack of a specific employment niche, as demonstrated in table 8.5.

Table 8.6 Period in present occupation

Period (years)	Number of migrants
0-1	4
1-2	3
2-5	7
5-10	9
>10	8
recent arrivals	1

Source: Interviews with 32 migrants in Karachi.

The most common characteristic was rather the way in which the migrant ‘advanced’ job wise. Starting from jobs of short duration and demanding few qualifications, the migrant gradually became more established, partly due to the educational trajectory that will qualified him for different types of desk-based work. In the long term he would then settle for what could seem a permanent position, and almost half the migrants in table 6.2 had held their present occupation for more than five years.

8.3 From migrants to residents?

It would seem evident that the Thalay migrant population in Karachi cannot only be analysed in terms of the motivational factors behind their initial move – education and employment – and that it is necessary to also include other aspects of their trajectories. As demonstrated in the table below, more than half the surveyed migrants from Thalay had been living in Karachi for over 10 years, most of them having finalised their educations. Furthermore, the vast majority of those who had lived in the city for more than 10 years had moved their families to the city, and a number of migrants had also invested in property in Karachi.

In the following paragraphs I will discuss the different aspects of the migration process, which are summarised in the table above. These aspects characterise the long-term migrant trajectory and they impact the reproduction of links between migrants in Karachi and their kin in Thalay.

Table 8.7 Characteristics of migrants from Thalay

Period (years)	No. of migrants	Married	Family in Karachi	Property in Karachi
0-1	1	0	0	0
1-5	4	1	0	0
6-10	8	4	2	1
11-15	7	6	3	2
16-20	7	7	7	2
>20	5	5	5	3
TOTAL	32	23	17	8

Source: Interviews with 32 migrants in Karachi

8.3.1 Marriages

The vast majority of migrants from Thalay left the valley as single men, and they then got married at some stage during the migration period. As evidenced in table 8.8 below, the marriage did in most instances take place back in Thalay, and the migrants would marry local women. 66% of all married respondents had married during a temporary return to Thalay. The marriage did, however, usually not spell an end to the migration trajectory, as most migrants would return to Karachi again.

The marriage-conditioned return also testifies to the reproduction of household hierarchy. As one of the Thalay migrants in Karachi remarked: “If I marry here in Karachi, my father will get much

more angry than he was when I ran away” (annexe 2, #6). Migrating without the consent of the father is not unusual, and a number of migrants narrated how they had left Thalay without the permission of their father. But marrying without that consent would be a much more serious matter. According to the respondents, it is the male head of the household, usually the father of the migrant, who in most cases controls the marriage process, with particular emphasis on the selection of the bride. “It is my father’s choice – and mine”, as one of the migrants said about the girl he had been engaged to (annexe 2, # 3). Another migrant stressed how he himself had chosen the girl, whom he wanted to marry back in Thalay, and he had also gone to the girl’s family as arbitrator rather than send another representative from his own family, as custom would have it (annexe 2, #13).

Table 8.8 Marriage patterns

Married in Thalay		Married in Karachi		Un-married	Total
Before migrating	On temporary return	To Balti women	To non-Baltis		
4	15	4	1	9	33 ¹⁾

Source: Interviews with 32 Thalay migrants.

1) One migrant divorced his first wife, married in Thalay, and re-married a non-Balti in Karachi.

A relatively small number of the migrants had married in Karachi. All, apart from one, had married Balti women, and it was significant that all the migrants who had married in Karachi had chosen their bride among migrants from the Khapulu area, the same part of Baltistan as Thalay.

There is only little material available on the marital arrangements pertaining to the children of Thalay migrants who have grown up in the city – basically because only few of the migrants’ children are of marriageable age yet. After 28 years in Karachi, Mohammad Ali Ibrahim would still marry his daughters off to migrants from his native village in Thalay (annexe 2, #25), and one of them had later returned to Baltoro in Thalay with her husband (annexe 1, # 7). Another of the long-term migrants, Mohammad Jusuf, had married his oldest daughter to a Balti from Shigar, who had been living in USA with his family for 10 years. At roughly the same time Sheir Ali, the younger brother of Mohammad Jusuf – 25 years his junior – had married a woman from his native village of Yearkhor, after having been away from home since the age of 10 (annexe 2, # 29).

8.3.2 Family

This is the only aspect of the migration practices, which *Thalaypa* are engaged in, where the migration is not exclusively a male practice. However, if women migrate and move away from Thalay, they move as dependents into a demarcated space defined for them by the male migrant, whom they are married to.

The implication is that the migrant has got the resources to access this space and supply additional members of his household. As it has been suggested previously, in table 8.7, the move of the nuclear family⁹² to Karachi is linked to consolidation in the city. The male migrant has been in the city for a number of years, and he has built up a solid income base there, in some cases also purchased property. This is confirmed in the table below where more details are provided for each of the migrants who have moved their families to Karachi. On average, the migrant had lived alone in the city for 9.7 years before moving his family to the city, and 6 migrants owned the houses they were living in. The importance of income security might be illustrated thereby that all four government servants, who were included in the survey, had brought their families to Karachi.

Tab 8.9 Thalay migrants with family

Respon- dent # ¹	Years in Karachi		Monthly salary	Housing situation
	Alone	with family		
4	15	3	9,000	owner
8	6	24	4,000	owner
10	15	0.2	NA	renting
15	3	34	NA	renting
16	18	5	6,000	renting
17	8	4	5,000	renting
18	14	4	5,000	renting
20	8	9	4,000	owner
21	20	14	NA	renting
22	3	7	NA	renting
23	2	30	>20,000	owner
24	6	9	6,000	renting
25	7	23	>20,000	owner
26	18	2	4,000	renting
27	8	12	>20,000	owning
30	4	5	5,000	renting

Source: 32 Thalay migrants in Karachi.

1) Refers to numbers provided in annexe 2.

⁹² 'The nuclear family' may, in this context, consist of just the migrant and his wife or of migrant, wife and children

One migrant, living in rented accommodation, estimated that it would cost him 3-4,000 rupees per month to provide for his family, and he would need an even higher income, because he still wanted to be able to remit money home to his family in Thalay (annexe 2, #13). Overall, the salary information provided in table 8.9 would seem to confirm this picture.

When the five married migrants, whose families were living in Thalay, were asked why they did not move their families to Karachi, two reasons were prevalent. One was that the migrant did not have the income he felt was needed in order to accommodate his family. The other was obligations towards the family back in Thalay, both the family of the migrant and the family, which the wife originated from. One respondent stated that if he moved his wife to Karachi, his mother would be the only woman left in the household (annexe 2, #19). In a number of other instances the wives of migrants had returned to Thalay in order to take care of ageing parents.

8.3.3 Property

The first Baltis, who invested in property, bought their houses or land in the Balti *mohallahs*, mainly Abessinia Lines, or just outside these. As prices have increased since then, more recent purchases have occurred outside the central parts of the city. It is a characteristic of property purchases outside the 'old' Balti *mohallahs* that the migrants have invested in property nearby where they were working, be it in Mango Pir to the north, in the steel mills area to the east of the city, or in Garoo even further east.

It is a characteristic of most property owners from Thalay that they have brought their immediate family to Karachi, usually after having acquired the property. So the investment in landed property can, as was seen to be the case in Skardu, result in the consolidation of the nuclear family in a place outside Thalay. Whereas the investment in property can be seen to imply a long term commitment on part of the migrant, this does not exclude other, similar footholds in other locations, as the story of Boa Ali confirms (textbox 8.3). Having run away from home in 1981 at the age of 19, Boa Ali returned for his father's funeral in 1983, only to leave again shortly after. He nevertheless returned in order to marry a girl from his own village, and he has no intention of parting with his property in Thalay, referring to both livelihood security and elements of social conduct and control in his native village.

As Selier observes in his study of migrants in Karachi, a high level of commitment to livelihood projects in the urban arena does not exclude commitments to the native area (Selier 1988: 49).

So what can be concluded is that territorial affiliations should not be considered a ‘limited good’ in the sense that linkages established in one location are replacing similar linkages somewhere else. This point is stressed through the fact that out of the six migrants who had built houses in Thalay, four had also invested in property in Karachi (annexe 2, # 6, 19, 23, 24). Another had invested in property in Skardu (#25).

Textbox 8.3

In 1991, Boa Ali bought a house plot together with his brother in Pukhtunabad in Mango Pir, 2km from Iqbal Nagar, the Balti *mohallah*. It was only after having bought the plot that he returned home to his native village of Gagoderik and married the girl to whom he had been engaged since 1985. In 1995 the property of the joint family in Thalay was divided, and Boa Ali and his brother also divided their property in Karachi. Boa Ali has since then bought another house, which has been sub-let. Even though Boa Ali has been away from Thalay since the early 1980s, he has never considered selling his property in Thalay. As he explained: “If you sell your father’s land, you have no security at home ... It is a shame to sell the land ... the villagers will not allow it”. (annexe 2, # 20)

8.4 Links between Thalay and Karachi

As it has been shown above, there are tendencies pointing towards a consolidation of the livelihood of the migrant in Karachi. Stays in the city are very obviously extended beyond the duration of the educational trajectory, which for most migrants constituted the initial motivation for the move to Karachi. As the period of residence in the city thus lengthens, there is, as demonstrated, a tendency that resources increasingly are concentrated in the urban environment. It has altogether proven easier to capitalise from the investment in education in Karachi than in Thalay where jobs are scarce. Furthermore, resources are invested in property, and there would seem to be a gradual structural transition within the multi-placed household, as the migrant moves his immediate family members to Karachi, and the migrant thus becomes the head of his own, nuclear unit.

How does this affect links between the migrants in Karachi and their kin in Thalay? The next passages comprise a discussion of how these relations evolve over time. This discussion is based on analyses of the frequency of visits, the transfer of resources from Karachi to Thalay, and the trajectories of those who actually return to Thalay.

8.4.1 Visits

The journey from Karachi to Thalay is a long and expensive one, with costs for travel, food, and accommodation estimated at 1,500 rupees each way. So for many migrants, especially the less well-consolidated ones, the total travel costs would equal one month's salary.

Tab 8.10 Frequency of visits to Thalay

Every year	Every 2 nd year	Every 3 rd year	Less	Stopped visiting	Never	Recent arrivals	NA	Total
7	6	6	2	4	4 ¹	1	2	32

Source: 32 migrants in Karachi 2001.

1) Includes one respondent who only went to Karachi in 1998.

Apart from four, all migrants interviewed have been back to Thalay on a regular basis since leaving the valley. And only one migrant (see textbox) had left the valley for good, not maintaining any contact whatsoever neither to his kin in Thalay nor to other Thalay migrants in Karachi. As shown in table 8.10, the majority of the migrants would return to Thalay regularly, 59% at least every third year, and 22% on an annual basis. Returns would normally be timed for the summer season, when the weather in Karachi is very hot, while temperatures in Baltistan are pleasant. Exceptions were marriage-related returns, as wedding ceremonies in Thalay usually take place during the autumn, after the last harvests. Stays would in most cases last one to two months, sometimes longer.

Text box 8.4

Hassan comes from a very poor family in Hadangus, and he cites poverty as his reason for going to Karachi around 1970, when he was 18 years old. He never got around to studying in Karachi, as he ended up in what he terms 'bad company' with Pakistanis, with whom he worked in a textile company. In 1976 he got married to a woman from Khapulu who had lived in Karachi all her life. As they were childless during the first years of their marriage, Hassan could save money to buy a plot of land and build a house in Abessinia Lines where he still is living. He has for the past 12 years had a job in an office, holding a monthly salary of 4,000 rupees.

His wife died five to six years ago, and Hassan was now left with four children, aged 14, 10, 8 and 6 years. The oldest son is mentally retarded, and the two youngest children live in a madrassa, receiving food and boarding there. When Hassan left Thalay in 1970 it was for good. He has never during his 30 years in Karachi returned to Thalay, he has never remitted money home, and he has never received any visits from his relatives in Hadangus. (annexe 2, #8)⁹³

⁹³ Hassan terminated the interview suddenly, after I had touched upon his relations with his native area, saying that it was enough, and that he would not talk any more.

Most of the migrants who used to go to Thalay on a regular basis, but had stopped, had moved their nuclear families to Karachi, and they no longer saw the need or, in some cases, the financial ability to go back home, travel expenses for a family easily amounting to one to two months of salaries (#4, 16, 17).

8.4.2 Remittance behaviour

Getting data on the amount of money actually remitted from Karachi to Thalay did prove difficult, partly because the interviews would often take place in semi-public spaces, with other migrants from Thalay overhearing the conversation. Furthermore, my research assistant and translator was also from Thalay, and this might have made respondents even more reluctant to part with information.

Tab 8.11 Remittances and investments¹

Regular remittances				Investing in house	Not remitting ²	NA
0-5,000	5,000-10,000	> 10,000	Amount not disclosed			
1	4	2	5	7	8	8

Source: 32 migrants in Karachi 2001

- 1) The total does not 'add up', as some of those who remitted regularly also would invest in house construction
- 2) Includes two students who received financial support from the parental household in Thalay

Altogether, a total of 12 – or 50% of those who volunteered information on remittance behaviour – did remit money home on a regular – either monthly or annual – basis, with amounts fluctuating between 1,000 and 24,000 rupees per year. Of the migrants who were not remitting, two were students and were supported from home, and three migrants had stopped remitting after having brought their families to Karachi. Apart from two, all those who remitted money home on a regular basis and/or had invested in a house in Thalay had completed their educational trajectories. It would appear that the migrant usually does not become a contributor to the household economy in Thalay before he has completed his education.

8.4.3 The returnees

Figure 8.2 is an attempt to summarise the trajectories of migrants who have returned from Karachi to Thalay. It does by no means comprise the total number of migrants who by late 2000 had returned from Karachi, but rather the ones who were available for interviews in Thalay during the fieldwork period. As three of the respondents derive from the same village, Baltoro,

the findings should not be considered representative for the entire valley, but rather indicative of patterns discussed previously in this chapter.

Most of the migrants had left at ages between 10 and 15 years, the youngest being those who could stay with relatives in Karachi (#1, #6). The oldest in the group left Thalay at the age of 19, and only after he had passed the highest level of education available in Baltistan at that time, namely F.A – the first in his village, Padangus, to do so. Altogether, the trajectories demonstrate the role of education as the motivation behind the initial move to Karachi. All respondents except one went to Karachi in order to pursue further education. The one exception, going away in the late 1960s, had instead gone as a labour migrant to Libya and Kuwait.

The difficulties related to employment opportunities in Thalay, which were expressed by migrants in Karachi, also seemed to be confirmed. Whereas four of the respondents eventually had acquired permanent, salaried jobs, only one of them – the headmaster at the Thalay high school – had been able to move straight into a job upon arrival back in Thalay. Three of the others had waited for respectively two, three and five years, and one had not found any employment at all. The migrant, who had gone abroad, had returned home with enough financial assets to invest in his own business, buying a jeep in Rawalpindi as well as property and a shop in Skardu.

The role of the marriage as an act that ties the migrant to his native area would seem to come through quite clearly, thus confirming findings from Karachi. Five of the returnees had been married during temporary returns from Karachi. One described how he had intended to marry in Karachi in the early 1970s, but pressure from home had caused him to change his mind (#3).

8.4.4 The Karachi Balti

The emergence of the ‘new’ group of second generation Baltis could seem a logical consequence of an opinion voiced several times by Balti migrants in Karachi: “If you are not born in Baltistan, you cannot live there”, so it was said several times, mainly with reference to the very harsh winters in Baltistan.

The implication of this is also that a new generation of Baltis is emerging in Karachi. They are the children born to the Balti families who have settled in Karachi. They are members of the Balti community, but the inter-generational links, which at least initially commit other migrants to their households in Baltistan, would seem to link this group of migrants to their families in

Karachi. The story of Mohammad Ali (text box 8.5) is typical of the generation of Thalay migrants who are born in Karachi and struggle with conditions in Thalay. Others, who had gone away as young boys, complained that they were unable to cope with winters in Baltistan.

Text box 8.5

Mohammad Ali belongs to the generation of Baltis who are born in Karachi. At 22, he is the oldest son of Mohammad Hussein, who was only a boy when he migrated to Karachi in the mid-1960s. He has over the years visited Thalay a total of three times – in 1993, 1994, and 1998 – and every time stayed for around two months. He said: “I was no so happy to be there. I have no friends in Thalay [...] I do not know my relatives”. It did not make things better that he only knows little Balti – not surprisingly, as he speaks Urdu to his parents. On his last visit, Mohammad Ali mainly went to Baltistan in order to pick up his domicile certificate.

(annexe 2, #15)

The inability to communicate in Balti is another characteristic of Baltis born in Karachi. “They are losing the language”, was what an English nurse, working for many years in Khapulu, said of Balti migrants who came to her clinic during their vacation. The children usually understood Balti, but they could not speak it. This was the general picture, confirmed by migrants who had children born in Karachi. Mohammad Ali’s father was only a boy when he left Thalay, he has been exposed to Urdu ever since, and Urdu is the language spoken internally in the family.

Text box 8.6

As one of the few Balti men born in Karachi, Ghulam Hussein had tried to return on a permanent basis. 26 years old and born in Karachi, Ghulam Hussein had visited his ancestral village twice. The first time was in 1987, when he stayed for six months. The second occasion was for his marriage in 1998, in the parental village of Olding in southern Baltistan: “It was my parents’ idea. I tell them that if it did not work out, I want divorce [...] It was difficult, in the village there are no facilities [...] Baltistani Baltis are much more old-fashioned”. After a few months of marriage, he got divorced. He paid his entire savings, 20,000 rupees, to the girl – “for her loss of honour”, as a friend of his put it. His parents had later come up with a another, similar scheme. But Ghulam Hussein had put his foot down, referring to his position as a cash earner: “I pay money to my father, I decide”. This should, he argues, entitle him to decide himself whom he is going to marry. He stresses that he would not mind marrying a Balti woman, but it should be a woman living in Karachi.

(annexe2, # 33)

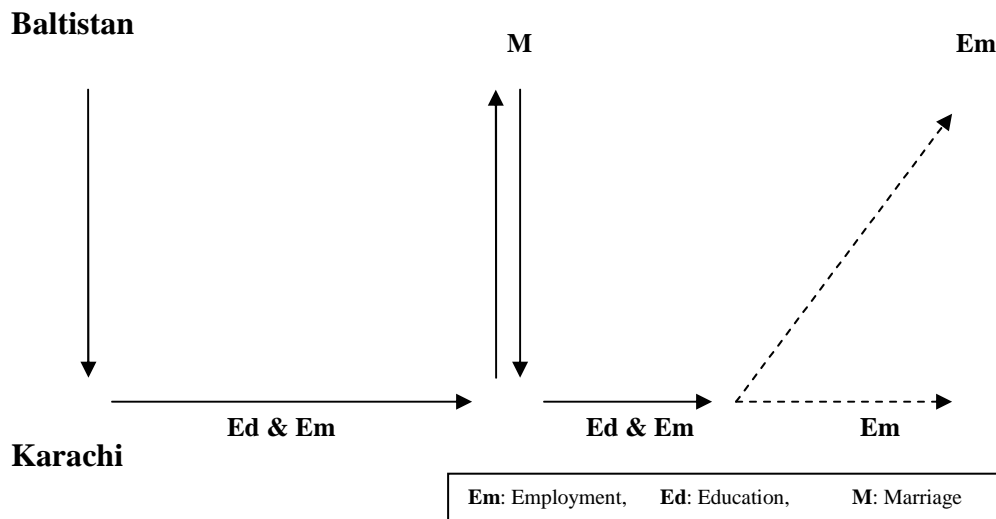
The story of Ghulam Hussein – born in Karachi to parents migrated from Simla – serves to underscore the contrast between the ‘Baltistani Balti’ (Hussein’s words) and the urban Balti, born in Karachi. Furthermore, there is the apparent tension between the parental generation, eager to reproduce linkages to the ancestral village, and the individual migrant, whose command over, and contribution to, the financial resources of the household enables him to oppose the intra household hierarchy.

Eventually, it would seem, the most important aspect of the affiliation to Baltistan lies in the domicile certificate. Being Balti, and being able to prove it (rather than speak it) becomes a key to access entitlements at the national level, be it access to certain institutions at educational institutions or employment opportunities within government service.

8.5 Revisiting the migrant trajectory

Fig. 8.3 constitutes an attempt to summarise the most significant elements of the trajectory, which the migrants from Thalay involve in when they go to Karachi.

Fig 8.3 Summarised migrant trajectory



The fixed point in the scheme is the departure of the young, usually unmarried, male migrant, mostly with the declared purpose of pursuing an education while sustaining himself through part-time employment or depending on relatives living in Karachi. Over the years he will be visiting home, once a year, or perhaps every second or third year. On one of these visits he is likely to get married, to a girl from one of the villages of Thalay, mostly the choice of the migrant’s father,

though there was evidence that the migrant was having more of a say. After the marriage, the girl would usually move to the groom's household, whereas migrant himself would return to Karachi in order to resume his studies and/or employment.

These stages can be identified for the vast majority of Thalay migrants in Karachi, with the marriage as the event where the parental generation can be said to assert its authority. The next stage could be characterised as a rather more uncertain one. The migrant has returned to Karachi, continuing his educational and employment-related activities. According to the 'system', which I referred to previously in the chapter, the migrant would be going home after completion of his education, so the final move in the migrant trajectory would be the return to Thalay, ideally in order to take up a position as government servant. This *does* also happen, as demonstrated by those who have actually returned to Thalay, after absences of up to 23 years. It is, however, a move, which would seem more of an ideal than a reality, given the number of unemployed graduates, both in Thalay and generally in Baltistan.

In a study among Balouch migrants to Karachi, Slimbach describes the integration process as a succession of stages, occurring over several generations. For the newly arrived migrant, "...the city is essentially a dormitory institution, a place to sleep, eat and work while they remit money back to their families" (Slimbach 1996: 142). They could have been anywhere, because the purpose of their being remains governed by obligations towards their home base. Slimbach identifies a second phase, comprising second and third generation Balouch, "...in which a class identity within the urban milieu imposes itself over pre-existing ethnic identities" (ibid).

Given the evidence presented in this chapter, similar but modified stages can be identified for the migrants from Thalay. The 'dormitory institution', which Slimbach refers to, can be recognised in the *chapar* and similar living arrangements, which single young migrants make use of. But the reduction of the migrant's activities to "sleep, eat and work" would not do justice to the majority of the migrants from Thalay, nor would it do justice to the way in which migrant livelihoods are linked to a larger picture. The move to Karachi would seem to crystallize the link between the territorialisation process and the livelihood strategy pursued by *Thalaypa*. It is first and foremost through the investment of household members in government secular education that the population in Thalay most actively engages with the territorialisation process – not for the sake of the process, but – as stressed in chapter five – in order to access local employment opportunities in government service⁹⁴.

⁹⁴ Apart from the Northern Areas, migration for educational purposes is not typical in Pakistan. Other studies of migrant communities in Karachi refer to mainly economic motives and one study observed that "... educational

Though the purpose of the initial move to Karachi for most of the migrants from Thalay was to pursue education, it seems evident that the motivation changes as the migrant becomes more established in Karachi. Whereas the marriage serves to reinforce linkages between the migrant and his household unit in Thalay, as well as intra-household hierarchy, the move of the nuclear family and the purchase of property can be interpreted as actions whereby the allocation of and control over allocative and authoritative resources within the household is shifted.

migration is rare in Pakistan” (Selier 1991: 48). In other cases education is considered a precondition for a successful migrant career: “It is only the better qualified who are encouraged to out-migrate so that their educational capital and yield a profit” (Landy 1997: 135).

Chapter nine

Conclusion

9.0 Introduction

In the analysis carried out so far, I have maintained an analytical distinction between the ‘larger story’ concerning the nature of the process of territorialisation whereby Baltistan is becoming part of Pakistan and the ‘smaller story’, focusing on the livelihoods and migration practices of the population in Thalay in south-eastern Baltistan. In this final chapter I intend to maintain this distinction and first summarise how territorial regimes historically have controlled and dominated Baltistan. In order to establish an understanding of how the territorialisation process in the present day is conditioning local livelihoods, I will then, concentrating on the ‘smaller story’ of the population in Thalay, address the empirical questions raised in the introductory chapter.

9.1 Territorialising the Northern Areas

In the presentation of the basic elements of the territorialisation process, which were discussed previously, the state was seen as historically constructed in a nexus between global and domestic relations, which basically comprises two aspects: the clear demarcation of the territory within which the state exercises its power; the exercise of power through a set of central political institutions.

Though the longest part of Baltistan's history is very sparsely documented, these two aspects can also be identified in Baltistan. During the periods where local rulers have asserted their authority – before 1840 and (to a limited extent) from 1948 to 1974 – the mountain area has been divided into small, autarkic states, governed by rajahs. Relations between the states were characterised by periodic warfare, but it would appear that the domestic situation inside these small states was relatively stable. The principle of *ress*, turn-taking, was the basis for both collective works in the 'corporate villages' and participation in public works under the auspices of the rajah.

Furthermore, since the late 14th century Baltistan has been part of the Islamic *Ummah*. Externally, this demarcated Baltistan from the equally Tibetan-speaking, but predominantly Buddhist Ladakh, and the specific nature of the Islamic beliefs in Baltistan, Shi'ism and Nurbakshiyya, did serve to demarcate Baltistan in relation to the Sunni-dominated territories further down the Indus. Internally in the village communities, Islam constituted a blueprint for social order, with the village *mullah* as the legal authority.

The Dogra period, which lasted from 1846 to 1947, can be described as politically stable. The territory controlled by the Dogra family was relatively clearly demarcated in relation to British India, and there were no open confrontations between the two colonial powers. However, the central, political institutions were of a nature, which served to antagonise the local populations. Whereas both rulers and subjects were Muslims during the last 400 years of the *rajah* period – since the Baltis converted to Islam – a Muslim majority was now ruled by a very small Hindu minority. Furthermore, the territory claimed by the Dogras, the maharajah state of Kashmir, comprised all the small, autarkic mountain states preceding it, and in order to control the territory it was necessary to employ and scale up a number of infrastructural techniques. This included the army garrisons, which fed on the territory they controlled. Moreover, in order to maintain routes of transportation and communication within the state, it was necessary to construct extensive road networks. The state depended on its ability to coerce the local population into providing the labour needed for these road construction works. So whereas the practice of *begar* – whereby the Dogra regime mobilised labour at the local level – was not unlike *ress* inasmuch as it involved the supply of local labour for public works, the scale at which it happened would seem to have been significantly different during the Dogra regime.

Perhaps it is the most lasting legacy of the Dogra regime that the territory controlled and ruled as the maharajah state of Kashmir has become an 'historical imperative', which has had the potential to dominate hegemonic discourses and territorialisation strategies in both India and Pakistan for more than 50 years, to the extent that it would seem to have been entirely ignored

that Kashmir consists of a conglomerate of different territorial units, characterised by diverse cultural and linguistic traits.

It is this discourse of ‘one Kashmir’, contested and *de facto* divided between two territorial states, which is at the core of the territorialisation process that has been evolving since 1948 in the Northern Areas. Accordingly there are also two, clear-cut but overlapping dimensions to the territorialising regime, whereby the Pakistani state since 1947/48 has been instantiated in Baltistan – as well as in the rest of the Northern Areas. One dimension is ‘externally focused’, as it relates to the way in which the Pakistani state asserts its control over the actual geographical area, which the Northern Areas constitute, thereby contesting Indian claims to the same territory and, by extension, responding to a presumed Indian threat of annexation. The other, more ‘internal’ dimension concerns the trans-local institutions and practices whereby the Northern Areas are ‘becoming Pakistan’.

The period from 1948 to 1974 constitutes a transitional period, as there were two territorialising regimes in the Northern Areas. The local rulers were returned to a position similar to the one they commanded prior to 1840, responsible for internal affairs within their own, demarcated territories, but depending on Pakistani armed forces for the maintenance of law and order. But the territories controlled by the rajahs were embedded within the Pakistani territorial state, with the Pakistani state in charge of the external dimension of the territorialisation process. It was only after the abolishment of rajah rule in 1974 that the Pakistani state became the sole territorialising regime.

Tab 9.1 Means of territorialisation

Externally focused	Armed forces Roads
Internally focused	Roads Urdu Government secular education Government service Political institutions

Table 9.1 summarises the most important means of the process whereby Pakistani state is territorialising the Northern Areas. It can be argued that the road network, which today is criss-crossing the Northern Areas, can be reckoned among both the externally and the internally focused dimensions of the territorialisation process. Though it is the need for the Pakistani army

to access the ceasefire line dividing Indian- and Pakistani-held Kashmir, which must be considered the driving force behind the initiation of road construction work in Northern Pakistan, it is also through the construction of roads throughout the mountain region that the Pakistani government has been able to employ the other infrastructural techniques. The Pakistan armed forces also constitute an infrastructural power which – while numerous and highly visible throughout the Northern Areas – first and foremost must be seen as externally focused, as the primary motivation behind the presence of Pakistani armed forces in the Northern Areas is to prevent Indian aggression.

The ‘internal dimension’ of the territorialisation process mainly evolves around the means actively employed by the Pakistani government in order to ‘mainstream’ the Northern Areas. These means include the use of Urdu as *lingua franca* and medium of instruction, the spread of government secular education, and the presence of different government departments in all parts of the Northern Areas. This will be discussed in more detail in relation to the territorialisation process in Thalay (below).

However, a full understanding of the processes whereby Pakistan as a territorialising regime operates in relation to the Northern Areas must also include the role given to the Northern Areas in the ongoing struggle to territorialise Pakistan. The ‘Kashmir discourse’ comprises the attempts of Pakistani governments to unite all the regions and peoples in Pakistan in a joint cause – the incorporation of Kashmir in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. As the Northern Areas are considered part of the disputed area of Kashmir, they have never become a constitutional part of Pakistan. There is here an inherent contradiction between the nature of the territorialisation process and the status of those who are being territorialised.

9.2 Livelihoods in Thalay

Central to this work has been the argument that the mountain livelihood should be conceptualised and analysed as an integrated one, conditioned by the habitat of the mountain population as well as political and economic forces from outside the mountain area. Accordingly livelihood strategies would aim to incorporate resources and opportunities from what the empirical analysis has previously referred to as respectively the ‘vertical’ and the ‘horizontal’ dimension.

9.2.1 The vertical dimension

The analysis has demonstrated that topographical factors retain their relevance, as they define the temporal and spatial constraints on farming practices in Thalay. It is an implication of this that the ‘corporate village’ retains its capacity as a functional unit where the collective management of natural resources is integrated with household-based agro-pastoral practices. There is also nothing to suggest that the utilisation of the vertical vegetation zones is changing – e.g. through the down-scaling of the livestock component and the declining usage of high altitude pastures, as it has been seen in other parts of Baltistan. The most prominent change in agricultural practices might be that the production of potatoes as a cash crop has increased dramatically over the past few years. This reflects a shift in land use patterns, which is similar to observations from other parts of Baltistan. The increasing production of potatoes is motivated by a high demand in lowland Pakistan where agro-ecological conditions are less suitable for potato production. In Thalay it is mainly fields previously used for wheat production, which are now utilised for potatoes. This reflects a situation where the demand for wheat can be met through purchases of wheat, which are also imported from the lowlands, especially the Punjab, with the Pakistani government subsidising transportation charges. Overall, these changing priorities demonstrate the need to understand changes to localised agricultural strategies in relation to the wider economic and agricultural picture. So even though agro-pastoral strategies and practices in Thalay are confined by the potential of the vertical vegetation zones, a proper understanding of the specific ways this potential is utilised must also build on an appreciation of markets and inter-regional dynamics, which belong to the horizontal dimension.

Despite the sale of farm produce, which approximately half the households in Thalay were involved in, it would appear that livelihoods in Thalay increasingly depends on incomes that are not related to the sale of farm produce. Significantly, the proportion of households in the valley, who were involved in off- and non-farm activities, was significantly higher than that involved in sale of farm produce – 82% against 48% – and the average household income from off- and non-farm activities was almost three times higher. The implication would be that a different type of asset has become important for the sustenance of livelihoods. Whereas agricultural production depends more on a combination of physical assets – e.g. farmland, access to pastures – and productive assets – livestock, irrigation systems – the income from off- and non-farm activities is more likely to be contingent on the human asset base, which the household commands, and which can be mobilised for income-generating purposes.

9.2.2 The horizontal dimension

In the discussion of the horizontal dimension I will continue the line of enquiry pursued above and mainly focus on the types of assets mobilised in order to sustain livelihoods of the population in Thalay. There are two, related dimensions to the nature of this mobilisation. One relates to the ability of the household to employ the human assets of its members where and when these may be in demand, basically converting labour into financial capital, mostly through different types of migration practices. The other dimension concerns the process whereby the human asset base of household members is 'upgraded' in response to emerging livelihood opportunities. As it will be argued in more detail below, this 'upgrade' must be interpreted in relation to the way in which the infrastructural techniques used by the Pakistani state become instrumental as the local population makes use of them in the structuring of their livelihoods.

In relation to local livelihood strategies the potentially most attractive of these infrastructural techniques would seem to be service in the armed forces and, especially, government service. Though both these employment types by nature are closely related to the Pakistani regime, there were strong indications that serving the government was not an end goal. *Thalaypa* may or may not subscribe to the 'Pakistani project', and whereas a number of retired servicemen mentioned the wish to 'serve the nation' as their motivation for joining the army, none of the government servants made similar references. There is, it would seem, a direct linkage between livelihood security and service in the armed forces or in government service - as exemplified through the reference to government service as 'a fountain' – and these are linkages which have been tested and seem to work. Monthly salaries are paid, for 20 or 30 years, the first local government servants have retired, as have servicemen over the past two decades, and they have all received huge lump sums upon retirement, as well as monthly pensions.

The importance of government service should not be measured in terms of the number of *Thalaypa* who have secured employment as government servants. In total it is approximately one in every ten households in Thalay who hold a government servant position. Important is rather the understanding of employment in government service as the motivational factor, which explains other activities that the local population engages in.

First and foremost among these other activities is government secular education. Islamic education, well-established in the local communities and taught in numerous *madrassas* in the valley, is valued *per se*, as Islam constitutes the blueprint of social order in Thalay. Here the value of government secular education, with Urdu as the medium of instruction, can be described as instrumental, as it constitutes the means to access local livelihood opportunities, which have

come about as a result of the territorialisation process. Employment in both government service and the armed forces has become conditioned by the attainment of specific educational standards. Accordingly, matriculation has become a precondition for admittance to the armed forces. As to government service, there is evidence to suggest that the available positions have become so contested that the successful applicant might have to be able to back up his educational achievements with financial assets.

9.3 Migration and livelihoods

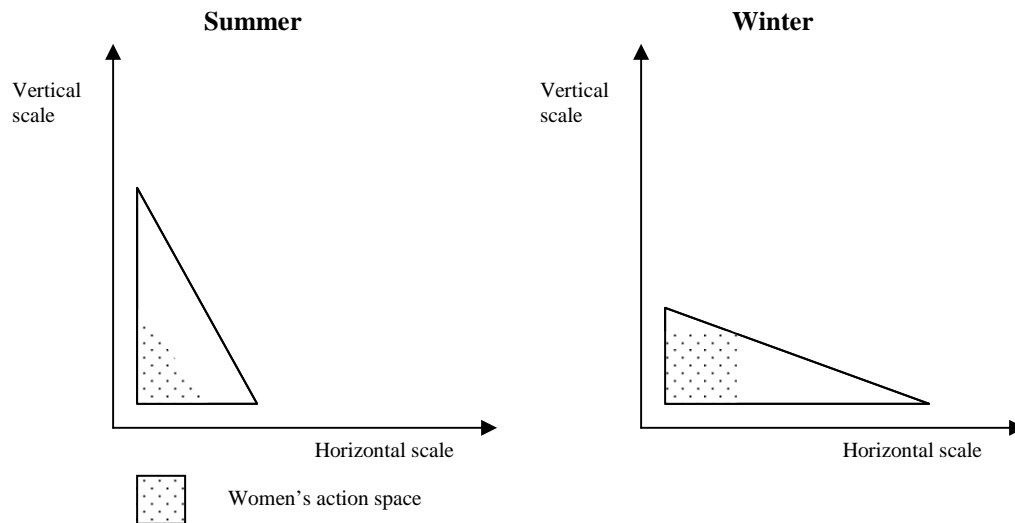
As discussed previously, observations made in the late 19th century would seem to suggest that the subsistence demands of the Balti population could not be met by utilising the resource potential of the Balti habitat, and this was seen as one of then main reasons for migration to the British territories. As the population since then has increased threefold, it is hardly surprising that the Balti population is involved in migration.

The majority of migration practices, which the male population in Thalay is involved in, should be understood in relation to deficits in the supply-demand situation, experienced by most surveyed households in Thalay, and mostly met through different types of seasonal migration, all of which would seem characterised by their annual recurrence. The seasonal migrant leaves for a pre-specified period of time, he knows his destination as well as the type of work he will engage in, and he has got a fairly good idea of the economic return he is going to make. The migration is a move which takes place in the agriculturally dormant period, and as such it becomes part of a subsistence cycle, solidly integrated in the totality of things to do in order to make a living.

This dimension of migration practices can be characterised as functionalist, as there is a close correlation between the needs of the household and the financial resources accruing from the migration practices. The migrant is, theoretically, an independent actor, but his moves, as well as the time space at his disposal, are narrowly constrained by the priorities of his domestic unit. It is an understanding that retains the notion of the well-defined household unit, where the moves away are temporary measures, carried out with the purpose to sustain livelihoods back home. The migrant is a temporarily absent household member, and the *duree* of the migrant would seem to be integrated within the *longue duree* characterising his social system.

In order to depict how the spatial organisation of livelihood activities in Thalay by 2000 had taken on a distinctly seasonal dimension, the model of mountain livelihoods, which was introduced as part of the conceptual framework, can be revisited.

Figure 9.1 Spatial organisation of livelihood activities



During the summers livelihood activities are largely localised in Thalay Valley, organised around utilisation of the vertical vegetation zones. The main exception from this is employment as guides and porters for visiting trekking groups and mountaineering expeditions. During the winters a large proportion of the men aged 18-50 years are able and likely to leave the valley in order to pursue employment in Gilgit or in the coal mines in Khosjab.

Figure 9.1 also comprises an attempt to outline women's action space. During the summers the spatial organisation of women's livelihood activities would seem to follow the general pattern, with activities defined by agro-pastoral strategies based on the exploitation of different vertical vegetation zones, and with both women and men taking part in agricultural activities. The main exception in terms of the spatial organisation of activities is that women in Thalay are not involved in herding activities in the high pastures of the valley. The picture over the winter is significantly different, as women stay in or near their homesteads in the *youl*, together with old men and children, as climatic conditions reduce livelihoods in Thalay to a state of hibernation. The implication is that women's action space largely is defined by the parameters of the valley, whereas men are able to utilise the room for manoeuvre defined by the territorialisation process.

Whereas figure 9.1 demonstrates how the spatial organisation of livelihood activities of the population in Thalay has got a distinctly seasonal nature, it also offers a simplified picture of livelihoods in Thalay, as both livelihood strategies and migration practices are reduced to negative feedback mechanisms, aimed at maintaining a status quo in Thalay. This constitutes a

‘territorial trap’ of its own, as it does not include the various long-term migration practices and residential moves, which *Thalaypa* are involved in.

Here the Thalay households, which reside in Skardu, provide an illustration. It is not a high proportion, perhaps 2-3%, of the total population in Thalay who now reside in Skardu. But it is significant that this development has taken place only over the past 10 years, and – as opposed to the quasi permanent move to Shigar, motivated by the availability of farmland – the move is motivated by the pursuit of a different kind of livelihood opportunities, e.g. shop keeping or salaried employment. Furthermore, the move is in most cases backed by financial assets accumulated prior to the move – e.g. the commutation payment given to servicemen upon retirement. It is an indication of the relative financial comfort of those who move out that they would not ‘convert’ their assets in Thalay, mainly land, for financial assets. Those who left would retain a foothold in Thalay, as they held on to their land in the valley, leaving it to be farmed by relatives.

Overall, it would appear that the very active involvement in government secular education, the manoeuvring in order to access employment in government service, and the residential moves to Skardu constitute a challenge to the structuralist perspective, which perceives of mountain areas as peripheries, their populations sustaining themselves by selling of their labour to industrialised core areas. The exchange of labour for capital is certainly present, as documented through the extent of seasonal migration in Thalay, but the conceptual understanding of the mountain population as a labour pool would seem to ignore the transformation of space, which is attributable to the territorialisation process, with the ensuing, local availability of alternative livelihood opportunities, and a road network that enables the local population to pursue a variety of options in a much larger catchment area.

9.4 Migration to Karachi

Karachi is the most popular destination outside the Northern Areas for migrants from Baltistan. Though a largely undocumented presence, various sources estimated that 6-8% of the total Balti population might be living in Karachi, mostly in the five to six Balti *mohallahs* which are scattered around different parts of the city.

Though a number of the respondents referred to Karachi as *Gharibung Ka Mahng*, mother of the poor – thereby indicating economic motives for migration to Karachi – approximately two-thirds of the Thalay migrants, who were interviewed, mentioned education as either the sole or the

partial reason for their move away from Thalay. The reason that they chose to go to Karachi in order to pursue education was in most cases the availability of part-time jobs whereby the migrants would be able to support themselves during their stay in the city. Furthermore, a proportion of those who migrated to Karachi at a very young age had relatives in Karachi, and the relatives could accommodate the migrants, especially during the first part of their stay in the city.

Though a number of the Thalay migrants referred to a 'system' of returning to Thalay upon completion of the studies in Karachi, the average period which those questioned had spent in Karachi was just under 15 years, and only a small number of the respondents were active students. Many had completed their studies and were now involved in full-time employment in the city. The educational trajectories, which the migrants from Thalay were involved in, would over time enable many of them to advance from lowly paid, short-term jobs to better employment opportunities of a more permanent nature, and more than half the migrants interviewed had been in their present jobs for more than five years. Parallel to the job-wise consolidation, a number of the migrants would also consolidate, financially and family-wise, in Karachi. Just over half the migrants questioned had moved their nuclear family to Karachi, and eight had bought property in the city.

Altogether, the move to Karachi would seem to crystallize the link between the territorialisation process and the livelihood strategy pursued by *Thalaypa*. In most cases the move was motivated by the aim to pursue further, government secular education, with Urdu as the medium of instruction, and, at least initially, with the aim to qualify for jobs in government service. The implication was not that all those who went to Karachi for educational pursuits, eventually would end up as government servants, because they certainly did not. Out of 32 respondents only four were government servants, and three of these worked in government-owned enterprises where educational standards were not a precondition for employment.

What is the future of the migration from Thalay to Karachi? The number of members of the Thalay Welfare Organisation had remained stable during the 1990s, and it had altogether become more difficult to find work in Karachi. Only a rather small proportion of those surveyed were actively involved in education, and just five of these had arrived within the past five years. This might reflect that there had been a halt to new employments in government service for a number of years during the 1990s, so there was altogether little prospect of seeing educational achievements converted into positions in government service. Accordingly, a situation has arisen where both the initial motivations for going to Karachi would seem weakened. Very few government jobs were available in Thalay, and the job situation in Karachi had, at least

temporarily, changed. It had become less certain that new arrivals would be able to find work in the city.

9.4.1 Revisiting the ‘problem of order’

The ‘problem of order’ was referred to previously as a problem of reconciling the sectional interest of individual actors with established set of rules within the social unit, and it was argued that the ‘problem of order’ became increasingly pertinent in the context of time-space distancing, which is a characteristic of migration. In order to address this problem and direct the analysis of the reproduction of relations between migrants in Karachi and households in Thalay, it was emphasised that it was necessary to focus on the individual process whereby the migrant pursues ‘life chances’ and allocative resources, and how the combination of, and control over, allocative and authoritative resources, which come about as a result of the migration process, over time would affect the reproduction of the multi-placed social unit.

In the context of long term migration from Thalay, contracting the marriage came to signify a point in the migrant trajectory where established intra-household hierarchies were intact. The typical unmarried migrant from Thalay, who lived in Karachi, was an economically independent actor, who at the time of his marriage had been living apart from the rest of his household for several years. However, the marriage-conditioned return was a move, which none of the migrants questioned or actively opposed. The marriage, to a girl from Thalay, mostly chosen by the migrant’s father, would seem to reaffirm inter-generational, hierarchical aspects of the *longue duree* and thereby also an attachment to the geographical core, which the migrant departed from. But the marriage-conditioned return was not a final home-coming. In most cases it was only a temporary return, as the migrant would stay in Thalay for a few months before returning to Karachi, typically in order to complete his education.

Whereas the marriage-conditioned return to Thalay and the journey back to Karachi were integral parts of the trajectories of majority of Karachi migrants, the next stage was less certain. The established ‘system’ of returning to Thalay upon completion of the education seemed challenged by the fact that the majority of those interviewed in fact had completed their education and had decided to stay in Karachi. “What is there for me to do there”, was the answer given by several of the Thalay migrants, when asked if and when they planned to return to Thalay.

In a number of instances the migrant was staying in Karachi in opposition to the paternal wish that he return to Thalay. The implication was not that the eventual return to Thalay did not occur,

and that sons would not return when called upon by their fathers, indeed a number of returned migrants in Thalay had gone home because of domestic issues. The implication was rather that the return of the migrant was one out of a number of scenarios, and that the authority within the social system thereby implicitly was being contested.

In relation to the reproduction of the social system, the significant action would seem to be the one where the migrant moved his family of procreation to Karachi, thus demonstrating both that he commanded sufficient allocative resources to support them and that he had the authority to change the organisation of social time-space within his social system. Rather than one unit, rooted in Thalay and with the migrant as a long-term absentee, a new household structure emerged, spatially apart from the established one. The implication was not that the social system disintegrated, but rather that its gravity changed, as it was based both in Thalay and in Karachi. Furthermore, it would appear that when the family of procreation had been moved to Karachi, the frequency of visits to Thalay would decrease.

From that perspective migration can be seen as a ‘problem of order’ in relation to the reproduction of social systems. The migrant *duree* would in many cases seem to transform the structure of the social system, and thus the institutionalised properties of the *longue duree*. But similar to the residential move to Skardu, the tendency that migration to Karachi evolved into long-term residency and property ownership in Karachi should not be taken as an indicator that assets in Thalay were being abandoned or sold off. The majority of those who had invested in property in Karachi, had also built a house in the native village in Thalay, and no one who had moved away on a quasi permanent basis had sold their land in Thalay.

Again the drawback of the analysis is the implicit understanding of women as passive agents, whose moves are seen and interpreted as consequences of the decision-making of their husbands. So the significance of the move, which takes a married woman from Thalay to Karachi, comes to lie therein that it serves as an indication of the nature and duration of the move, which her husband has engaged in. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the action space of women in this study is reduced to one field, namely the domestic sphere, and the move to an urban area does in fact serve to curtail the physical room for manoeuvre that women command.

9.4.2 The Pakistani?

In terms of the interpretation of both the migration process and the integration of the migrant livelihood with the territorialisation process, the migrant *duree* might be characterised as a

transitory phase between the Baltistan-based livelihood, rooted in Thalay, and the next generation, born to migrants, brought up in Karachi, and socialised into an environment, which is entirely different from Baltistan

The distinction between livelihoods in Baltistan and Karachi was repeatedly stressed by the migrants, who lived in Karachi, but were born in Thalay. Referring to the hardship of Balti winters, they claimed that if you were not born in Baltistan, you could not live there. This was also confirmed by some of the migrants, who had been born in Thalay, but had spent most of their lives in Karachi, and now found themselves struggling with winters back home. None of the Baltis, who had grown up in Karachi, had fond memories of the stays in their ancestral villages in Thalay, feeling alienated and finding it difficult to communicate with their relatives.

Altogether, it would appear that a generation of Karachi-born and -based Baltis were in the making. For them being Balti would neither implicate an affiliation to a distant location in the high mountains nor the inter-generational obligations, which such an affiliation would entail. Their 'mother's land' might, literally, be Thalay, but their parents would be living in Karachi, very likely on a long-term basis. Born into an Urdu-speaking environment, they would be losing the Balti language. Altogether, the most important implication of their status as Baltis would seem to be manifested in the domicile certificates, which some of them had picked up on their last visit to Baltistan. The domicile certificates, documenting their link to the ancestral lands, would then be used to gain access to the Northern Areas quota of jobs in government service and places in educational institutions.

Rather than use the migrant move to Karachi in order to access positions in government service back in Thalay, it is the belonging to Thalay that has become instrumental in order to access entitlements in areas controlled by the Pakistani state. So perhaps the Balti born in Karachi is in fact, effectively, a Pakistani.

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NEWSPAPERS AND NON-ACADEMIC PERIODICALS:

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09.07.2001

24.09.2001

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10.01.2005
14.01.2005

Politiken 07.01.2003.

The Economist 06.04.2002

Annexe I

Interviews in Baltistan

1) Hussein

Hussein is, at 32, a member of a household in Daltir. It is an extended household with a total of 17 members. As the members of the youngest generation are very young, it is only Hussein and his brothers, five altogether, who are involved in migration.

Hussein has been working as a mountaineering cook for 12 years, going with tourist groups on camel safaris, boat safaris, jeep safaris and train safaris all over Pakistan. Based in Islamabad, he is working for 9 months every year. His wife and most of his children are staying with his in-laws, but Hussein keeps his 9 year old son with him in Islamabad, because he wants him to go to a good school. He has got an annual income of 50.000 rupees, and he is staying at the travel agency where he is working in Islamabad.

His 25 years old brother has been in the army for 7 years, presently doing duty in Kharmang. There are photos of him on the wall, in a very flashy uniform that gives an impression of much more than a *sepahi*, his actual rank. His wife, 25 years old, lives in his household, and she has recently given birth to his first child.

Another brother, 22 years old, has recently left for Khujab where he is going to spend the winter. He has been doing this for seven years, and, like other Daltiris, it is a cyclical move, with him returning in the spring. His wife is also living with his household.

COMMENTS: It seems a very likely hypothesis that the fragility of extended households is enhanced due to the mobility and lengthy absences of male household members. With the absence of the ones who are the very reason for their being in the household, many women will find themselves in a very difficult position, and in the long run this will lead to the break up of the household.

2) Ahmed Ali

A small household of 7 members, with 4 four more or less permanently outside Daltir.

Ahmed Ali is 25 years old, he holds a F.A., pressed he tells that his father told him to go to college in Skardu for two years. He works as a mountain guide in the summer season, after two years as a assistant guide. This year he has guided two groups and made 20.000 rupees, some of which he gives to his father.

3 brothers are working in Khujab during the winter. One, aged 40, is however living in his own household. Another, aged 30, is also married, but his wife is living with her family. These two have been going to Khujab for 10-15 years. The third, aged 22, have been going for 4-5 years. The total income was 15-20.000 rupees.

The youngest brother, aged 18, is running a shop, Thalay Trading Centre, at Hussein Chowk in Skardu. The shop, owned by the family, has been in existence for 3 years, giving a profit of 40-50.000 rupees annually.

COMMENTS

Would have preferred to talk to the father, because Ahmad was simply not credible. Too attempted smart, too childish, knowing very little about farming practices, sales of farm produce, etc. A household dominated by the absentees, family members being anywhere else but Thalay. Again an example of a married woman living with her own family.

3) Ali Mamo

A relatively small household of 5 persons. 3 sons are, however, living outside the household.

Mohammad Ali, 18 years, is only partly a household member, as he spends the winters in Khojab. He has been going for four years, the first time spending 1 month, the second time 2 months. He thinks that life in Khujab is better, but comes home to farm. He married 10 days ago. Monthly pay in Khujab (if working hard): 6000 rupees. Free boarding. Expenses for living costs: 800-1200 rupees. When asked if he gives all his earnings to his father, there is much laughter.

Army-son (did not get his name), aged 26, joined - according to his father - because his father told him to. He himself is absent, so he cannot reply. It is 18 years ago, and he married 14 years ago. His wife and two children are living in his fathers house.

Ghulam Abbas is 38 years old, he finished 5th. class in Yearkhor, and married in 1979. He went to Islamabad (ISL) 10 years ago, after having spent 7 years in the army. He requested to retire, then got government job. Family (wife and 4 children aged 8-18) moved to ISL 6-7 years ago. Now he holds two jobs - one government job, one private job - because he needs the money. The family lives in a room, 1000 rupees/month, rented from a man from Khapulu, who has rented the house himself. Children, both sons and daughters, going to Urdu medium school, cost around 1000 rupees/month. He himself likes farming very much, but his wife likes life in ISL. Biggest problem here: lack of educational facilities. Sending home 400 rupees/month in remittances. Self home every two years. Other family members not going, expenses too high. Comments on general preference for governmental jobs: "Private jobs are like snow. When it is melted, it is gone. Government jobs are like a fountain. They go on forever." Detailed knowledge on other families who have moved to Islamabad for good.

4) **Sheer Mohammad**

Sheer Mohammad is 28 years old and he has spent a considerable, but unclear number of years in Karachi. He went through 6.-7. class in Karachi, but passed Matric in Dhagoni, at a Islamabad-board (he stresses this though he has never used his education (status)). Then he went back to Karachi, receiving 1000 rupees per month from his father until he found employment, working as a waiter and in ice cream production, and getting the jobs through other Thalaypa living in Karachi. Monthly wages around 6-7000 rupees. He was living in the Thalay House in Karachi. He left Karachi because his father told him to come home and get married. He separated from his fathers household 4 years ago, because the wives did not get along, and he cannot go to Karachi with his family, because he cannot find anyone to farm his property. For the past 5 years he has been working as an assistant guide, with a friend who works in a company getting him work. He receives 10.000 rupees in salary. 5/12: I meet him again, he is on his way to Karachi, planning to stay there throughout the winter. I expect to meet him in the Thalay House.

COMMENTS

Not all that trustworthy. Makes no secret of his preference for living in Karachi, but not even he would consider selling his land in order to move to Karachi for good. Incredibly bad teeth. Nuclear household, making sure his children goes to school.

5) **Abdullah**

30 years old, heading a nuclear family, Abdullah comes from the village of Hadangus, but he is in fact absent most of the year. For 15 years he has been going to Khojab most winters, and for 11 years he has been working as a porter during the summer, spending 3-4 months every summer based in a common house in Skardu. From here he goes to PTDC Motel when new trekking groups arrive. Common procedure, so it seems, for Thalaypa going to work as porters without being attached to a company. Every summer he joins up with 5-6 groups, making approx. 10.000 rupees/year.

5-6 months is the annual period in Khosjab, he starting going as a 15 year old (?), claiming that he ran away from home. Average income: 20.000 for hard work, 10.000 for normal work. Stating unemployment as reason for going. Interestingly, only 2 persons from Hadangus - Abdullah and his brother - are going to Khosjab.

6) **Ghulam Hassan**

Ghulam Hassan is 30 years old and heads an extended family (including an aged mother). He is uneducated, but makes sure that all his children are educated. Oldest daughter has passed Matric, educated in health/family planning. She gets trained in Dhagoni and disperses medicine in Hadangus. GH spent 3 months in Karachi in 1997, having a prearranged job cutting marble, making 13.000 rupees in this period. Would have liked to go again, but his mother's disease prevents him.

Working with trekking groups for 10 years, 7 years as a porter, now assistant cook, 4 months every year. Seemingly very popular due to talents for singing and dancing, making 20-25.000 rupees/year.

7) **Ghulam Haider**

Ghulam Haider is 29 years old, he comes from Baltoro, but he has spent more than half his life in Karachi. He went to Karachi in 1984, joining two uncles who were living in the same house, at that time at Karachi University (the two uncles are respectively the headmaster at the local high school and Ibrahim, the Social

Organizer of AKRSP). GH finished his Matric, his F.Sc. and B.Sc. in Karachi, the B.Sc. in 1997, after he had tried, and failed, to get admittance to the B.E. (Engineering). There is a quota of 9 from Baltistan (Ganche District?) every year.

In 1996 he married in Karachi. The girl also came from Baltoro, but she had left the village at the age of two, and had gone to Karachi with her family. Her parents had settled there for good, the father working as an advocate (annexe 2, # 25), the girl passing Matric before marrying. In May 1998 the couple returned to Thalay and settled in Baltoro. As to the reason, he hesitates for a long time, and Youssaf offers the partial answer. The father had been ill, and as the oldest son he had to return and take up farming. Besides, he had to build a house, as the four brothers, of whom his father was one, had separated and split the land.

Besides studying he has been working as an accountant and cashier in different offices, averaging 3000 rupees/month. He has made some savings, but he has been spending them on building the house and on costs of living. He plans to leave for Karachi again in a couple of weeks, but he is secretive about what he is going to do there. It is, however, not just a winter stay, but perhaps 1-2 years.

COMMENTS

Very sincere and friendly man, trying to meet his obligations here before getting on with his own life. Probably more at home in Karachi than in Thalay, and how could he possibly know anything about farming? He speaks so much English that it will be interesting to meet him again in Karachi (this never happened, Ghulam Haider stayed in Thalay).

8) **Mohammad Ali**

Mohammad Ali is 28 years old and lives in Daltir Gamba (Lower Daltir). He has got a B.A. from the Allah Iqbal Open University. He is living with his wife, his mother, and two small sons, as well as an unmarried older brother. He speaks openly of family planning, as he does not want more children. He mentions that his wife has sold his two horses - not at all disapprovingly, as the division of land between the four brothers had implied that he did not have land in the *broq* any longer, and he no longer needed the horses for transportation.

Mohammad Ali lives in Islamabad most of the year. He has been working as a mountain guide for 11 years, with his present company for 5 years. A sister of his is also living in Islamabad, her husband working in the Ministry of Finance. To the question why he does not move his family to Islamabad instead of purchasing land in Shigar, he answers that i) for non-government servants housing costs are very high in Isl. ii) his parents are very old, and they would not be able to move and stay there.

On the last point is worth mentioning that last year, when he had the possibility to go to Italy - an Italian friend arranging the visa - his father had forbidden him to go, so he had not went.

His annual income is 40000-100000 rupees, depending on the number of foreign tourists coming to Pakistan. Instead of going to Islamabad, he has bought land in Shigar, 6-7 kanals fields at a cost of 180.000 rupees. He thinks that Daltir is too cold in the winter, whereas Shigar is located at a much lower altitude, 2.250 meters (and there are trees in Shigar), and he intends to build a house in Shigar in a couple of years.

COMMENTS Very kind, knowledgeable man, both modest and “modern”, embarrassed over what he considers his ‘simple’ living conditions, but extending an open invitation. Knowing much about the history of the area as well as the mountaineering history of the entire region. It would be interesting to “map” his family, as it seems that he has well-established relatives in both Islamabad and Karachi. Significantly, he is the first man in the valley to acknowledge the independent action of a woman.

9) **Hussein Ali Farman**

Hussein is a member of a unusually big, and very mobile household, encompassing - besides his father and stepmother - two brothers and their families as well as the wives of brothers who are now living in Karachi. Altogether 20 people living in same house.

FARMAN spent 9 years in Karachi, leaving in 1985 at the age of 15. He passed Matric in 1987, stating as the reason for going to Karachi that he wanted a science education, which he could not get in Baltistan. He passed his F.Sc. in 1990, then came home in order to get married. After 5-6 months he left again for further studies, passed B.Sc. in 1994 and then returned - due to “financial problems” he could not go on for higher studies. He applied for 4 government jobs in 3 years, then finally got a position at the local high school where he is presently working.

3 BROTHERS, aged 35, 22, and 18, are currently living in Karachi, one of them has, however, left just a month ago. Raza Ali, aged 35, has been living alone in Karachi two years, working as a watchman in a private home.

Two days ago, his wife left Baltoro in order to join him. His brother, Naqi, and his family is living in the same house (annexe 2, # 17).

ANOTHER BROTHER, Ghulam Abbass, is 39 years old, and he has retired from the army. GA retired with the rank of NS after 25 years. He has given his total pension, 4 lakhs, to his father, and he is now working at home. The father intends to invest the money in land, because he has many sons. Not in Thalay, but in Shigar. Getting land in Thalay is impossible, and in Skardu land is getting too expensive.

COMMENTS: Large, spatially dispersed household, in the long run surviving economically due to its spatial mobility. The story of Farman, and that of Ghulam Abbass, confirms the unquestioned loyalty to the home. After 5 years away he returns in order to get married, then leaves again. He also confirms the quest for government jobs, providing "safety", even though it means that he has to wait 3 years for a posting.

10) Headmaster

(Title – missed the name)

Headmaster returned to Thalay in 1994 with his family, after 23 years of almost permanent absence. He went in 1971 at the age of 14, became Master of Islamic in 1973 and passed Matric in 1977, and F.A. in 1977, before getting back home in 1980 in order to get married. He left again for Karachi, passed B.A. (hon.) in 1983, interspersed with student jobs. And he gave the availability of student jobs as the prevalent reason for studying in Karachi rather than ISL or Lahore. After finishing his M.A. in 1984 he worked for 10 years, now joined by his family, in ISL and Muzafarabad in Azad Kashmir, before returning to Thalay in 1994 - claiming that if he wanted a teacher job, he had to go to the Northern Areas. And he does not question his belonging: "This is the land of my mother and father, so I like it!"

At the same time he deplores the lack of educational facilities for his son - he does, however, not bemoan the plight of his daughters to the same extent.

11) Hajji Mohammad Ibrahim

Mohammad Ibrahim is around 45 years old, he is the father of two sons and four daughters, but his family constitutes part of a household of altogether 28 members. He is now living permanently in Thalay and Skardu after having spent more than 20 years down country and abroad.

After having spent a couple of years in Rawalpindi and Lahore, he got to Karachi in the late 1960's. He worked here for approx. 10 years and got himself a driving license. He praises life in Karachi at this time, calling the city "Gharibung Ka Mahng", mother of the poor, because of the many opportunities existing in the city.

In 1975 he returned home, stayed 6 months and got married. He had intended to marry in Karachi, but pressure from home caused him to change his mind. After his marriage he went to work as a driver in Libya. He stayed here 2 years and two months, but he had to leave after the hanging of Bhutto, when all Pakistani guest workers were expelled from Libya. He then went to Syria where he could only stay for four months. Afterwards he continued to Saudi Arabia, where he did not work, but performed *umra*, the off-season pilgrimage. He stayed for six months, but did not work, only stayed in Mecca and Medina.

Returning home, he worked for one year in Karachi, then found work in the steel mills. Then in the mid-1980s a friend got him a visa and a work permit for Kuwait where he stayed and worked as a driver for 5 years. Joining from the age of his children, he came home every two years during this period. He held a salary of 15.000 rupees per month and speaks highly favourable of living in Kuwait.

Due to the Gulf War he returned home in 1990. He bought a house in Skardu and bought a jeep in Rawalpindi - the latter at a cost of 205.000 rupees. He still owns the same jeep, but claims that he does not make any income on it, having lost one lakh over the years, partly due to a dishonest driver during the first years.

He claims that he would like to go abroad again, but that his mother will not allow him to leave. He also says that he would like to go and settle in Skardu, but his family does not want to go. On the other hand he points to safety and tranquillity of Thalay.

COMMENTS

A very down-to-earth hajji when we finally caught up with him in his stable where he was talking to his *dzo*. Despite the long periods, more than 20 years, he had spent outside Thalay, he seemed very much at home in the valley, though he had bought a house in Skardu. But seemingly his family did not want to live there, and his mother did not want him to go abroad again. Good, straightforward man, though his opinions on different issues tended to shift as the interview progressed.

12) **Mohammad Ali**

Mohammad Ali is 29 years old and lives in Padangus. When we visited the village for an interview, he had to be called back down from the hill side where he was working. He is the holder of a BA and has recently been appointed teacher at the high school in Thalay. He is the first holder of a degree in Padangus, and he has undergone a stage wise education; primary school in Padangus; middle school in Dhagoni; Matric and FA in Skardu - all at the urging of his parents and elder brother.

In 1991 he moved to Karachi in order to pursue further education and finance this via part-time jobs. He studied during the evenings and worked days as a receptionist in a pharmaceutical company where he stayed for 4 years. In Karachi he shared a flat in Abessinia Lines with four other local boys, and he was General Secretary of the Union of Thalaypa in 1994-95. At that time 64 students and young people from Thalay were present in Karachi. The union as such was founded in 1983 and boasts both a president, a general secretary and a cabinet.

On the Thalay House in Manzoor Colony he states that the 1985 purchase of it became possible due to the pooling of resources of Thalaypa in Karachi. In 1994 the house was renovated. He calls it "national property" (of Thalay), but interestingly he does not refer to the house until I mention it.

In 1994 he got his BA degree in July and went home to Thalay to get married in September. After this his whereabouts are not entirely clear, but he was looking for a job in Islamabad, and worked as a mountaineering guide on the Baltoro Glazier for 2 years. Only very recently he was appointed teacher at Thalay High School. "All people love their native place", he replies when I ask what he thinks about being the only graduate in Padangus where nothing much happens.

NB MA mentions a house for Burdas boys in Abessinia Lines.

13) **Said Ali's house**

Said Ali Sahib is the, unfortunately absent, head of a quite multilocal household, living in the village of Tasso. As he himself is not there, we talk to his fourth son, Said Ibrahim.

Son no.1 is Said Amir Hamza, aged 50 (or thereabouts). After 25 years in the Pak army he retired 3 years ago, but he got a GS-job in something called FIU (one of the agencies). He is now living with his family in his own house in Skardu.

Son no. 2 is Said Mehedi Shah who has been living in Karachi since 1982 (annexe 2, # 18). First he completed his FA at college, then BA, as well as MA in Islamic at Karachi University. Since 1987 he has been working at a high school in Karachi. Unusually, he was married at the time he went to Karachi. He took his family to Karachi after having become a teacher, and he visits Thalay once every three years. He is living in Iqbal Nagar. Son no. 3 is Said Hadi. He lives at home and is, according to Said Ibrahim, retarded.

Son no. 4 is Said Ibrahim (with whom the interview is carried out). He is 26 years old, married last year, and is the father of a daughter. He went to Karachi in 1984, aged 10, and lived at Mehedi's house in Karachi. He finished his studies in Karachi - Matric, FA, BA, MA - in 1994, and it seems as if he has been staying in his father's house in Tasso, waiting for a job opportunity, ever since. He seems interested only in a GS-job (NOTE: There is an age limit on GS-jobs: 35 years). Furthermore, it seems as if no new GS-positions have become available for 6-8 years.

Son no. 5 is Said Shah Abbass who finished his education when he passed Matric. He joined the Pak Army in 1999, but resigned again the same year, and he is now staying at home. He has the dubious honour of being the first man of Thalay to resign from the army.

COMMENTS

Sayd Ibrahim is, in his very own way, an interesting case. Having spent the period from his 10th. to 20th. year in Karachi, he has missed much of his childhood as well of his teenage years, maybe his entire network in Thalay. Youssaf says that he is wandering (meaning that he is neither here nor there and basically no good), but I rather think that he is lost between places. He does not work in the fields, he might not know how to. He has married and reproduced himself, and that is all he has done for the last 6 years.

Overall, the household is an example of a very farsighted and determined father who has made sure that his sons got going. Which is why he was a pity that we did not meet him.

14) **Kasim Laplappa**

Kasim Laplappa is 35 years old, married, and he comes from the village of Burdas. We meet him on the thoroughfare passing through Burdas, and his outward appearance sets him a bit apart from the rest of the village community, he is wearing coloured glasses in a golden frame, and the logo of Nike is appearing on the collar of the garment he is wearing under his shalwar kamish. He is carrying a packet of cereals from Nestlé.

KL went to Karachi in 1983, at the age of 18. According to himself, he failed in school in Thalay, so he could just as well go to Karachi. He worked for 4 years as a carpenter apprentice, at a salary of 1500 rupees pr. month. But as he saw the nice, ironed clothes, which some of his friends, who were house servants, were wearing, he decided to change trade in 1988. He maintains, repeatedly, that he only received a salary of 250 rupees pr. month, but he was living in the same house as his “masters” and got all that he needed from there. During his time in Karachi he also took driving lessons, though he had to get his license at home, in District Ganche.

In 1991 a doctor told him that he was suffering from allergy, and that he had to move to a drier, cleaner environment. So he went to Islamabad. For 8 years he has been driver for a private family here. His monthly salary is 3600 rupees, and he is living in an office. He was married in 1994, but his wife and two children reside in his father’s household in Burdas. He maintains that his reason for not taking his wife to Islamabad is that in that case there are no other women, except his mother, in the household.

This year he has spent 1 month in Thalay, and he will be returning in 6 days. When asked what he thinks of life in Thalay, he repeats the well-known song lines: “It is our homeland”.

Besides having been living down country for half of his life, KL is also a ‘broker’, finding work for young boys as house servants in Islamabad. He talks about this as almost some sort of mission. He thinks of Burdas as a remote place, so he sees it as his duty to take Burdas boys down country and introduce them to (civilized) city life. KL takes the boys down country at ages of 7-11 years, and he finds them work as house servants and playing mates in well-off households. For the time being there are 11 Burdas boys living in Islamabad, and he plans to take 4 or 5 boys with him to Islamabad this year. A bit pressed he admits that he gets 6-700 rupees from the parents of each boy, alternately money is deducted from the salary of the boys.

A total of 13 people from Burdas, including the boys, are living in Islamabad, but only one family has settled there permanently.

COMMENTS

Good interview, detailed answers. I am not sure that I like the practice of taking young boys to Islamabad, it reminds me of some sort of human trafficking. At the same time, however, in such a tight-knit community he would be in immediate trouble if the boys were maltreated. Interesting demonstration of intra valley differences. Burdas *does* in house servants, in cities, and no one goes with tourists, or to Khosjab. In Upper Thalay it is totally opposite.

15) Mohammad

Mohammad, aged 48, is the head of a female-dominated household. Female-dominated, that is, because most of the adult male family members are living outside Thalay on a permanent basis.

YOUSAF is the brother of Mohammad. He is an Islamic teacher, and he has been living in Karachi for 15 years, a part of the time with the family. His wife has just left Thalay in order to join him again. She likes being in Karachi, he appears to like her presence less - seemingly a matter of household economics.

Ali, 40 years, is another brother of Mohammad. He is also uneducated, and he went to Gilgit 12 years ago. “I will go to Gilgit, and I will get much money there” - is what his brother remember him saying. He has never been to Thalay since then. Mohammad went to Gilgit in order to invite him for his son’s wedding, but he did not want to come. Mohammad speculates that as Ali is childless, he does not want to go home and confront his family. He is working as Government Servant in a Girls High School in Gilgit

HUSSEIN, aged 37, is also a brother. He went to Gilgit with his family 7 years ago, seemingly because his brother had paved the way and provided a GS job for him. He is also working as watchman at a High School. As opposed to Ali, he visits Thalay every year, the last time at the wedding of his nephew.

SHEIR ALI is the oldest of Mohammad’s sons. He is 24 years old and went to Karachi 6 years ago, at the age of 18 (annexe 2, #3). He wanted an education - BA comm. - that did not exist in Skardu, and he had an uncle who was living in Karachi. He did, however, not stay with his uncle, but in Mahmoodabad. He found work as a shopkeeper, making 1500 rupees. Now he is supervisor at a bakery, making 6000-7000 rupees. He has never depended on money from home. He passed his BA Comm. in 1996, but he decided to stay on and study for B.A.L.L.B. (law degree), and he has now passed part one. SA visited home two months ago, for his brothers wedding. He himself is to be married next year, to a girl from Belghar.

He has moved around a lot in Karachi, but is now living in Merryweather Road.

GHULAM ABBASS is, at 22, the youngest son of Mohammad. He was under education at the college in Skardu, for a FA, when he decided to join the army, at the age of 17. "I will serve the nation" - is what he told his father. The latter is rather philosophical about it. The son should get his education, because "education is wealth". But on the other hand, now he sends home money, and that is also wealth. So wealth is wealth, and the son remit a total of 10-15000 rupees per year.

GA got married this summer. It seems that he himself arranged his marriage, as he sent a letter to his father, telling him which girl he wanted. His wife is now living in the household of his father.

COMMENT Good interview, good respondent. When asked if he would not also have wanted to go away if he had had the chance, Mohammad answers that his father had been sick, and as he had been the oldest brother, it was his duty to stay at home. He is not really inclined to go and visit his son and brother in Karachi, because he does not speak Urdu. Not quite updated on Sheir Ali's whereabouts and employment in Karachi.

16) **Fidar Ali**

Fidar Ali is 50 years old, he is from Tagary, and he is the head of a nuclear household. As one of the few members of his age group he left Thalay for education, and he passed Matric in Khapulu in the mid-60s, when a total of 4-5 boys from Thalay were studying at the high school in Khapulu. It was a family decision that he should continue schooling - his father was uneducated.

Finding work after passing Matric in the mid-60s proved easy, as only few educated people were available in Baltistan at that time. He worked as a government servant in the tehsil office in Skardu for 4 years, at a salary of 160 rupees per month, before being transferred to the District commissioner in Khapulu for another 4 years, during which time he also got married. His final 22 years he again passed in Skardu, at the LBMRD-office (Local Bodies-something). His pay at the final level was 4000 rupees per month. Asked why he - like so many others - did not settle in Skardu with his family, he said that he was the only son of his father and had to stay (leave his family) at home.

In 1996 he retired and received a pension of 350.000 rupees. He invested in a shop in Tagary, and claims he is making a profit of 800 rupees per day.

The oldest son, Ajaz Hussein, is 23 years old, and he did not pass his Matric. He went to Karachi in 1994, at the age of 17, but after 10 months he moved on to Lahore (did not want to give any particular reason). Here he worked as a hotel-worker for 2 years, making 2000 rupees monthly. He returned home on a visit in 1997, and his father did not want him to leave again. Since then he has been working as a shopkeeper.

The second-oldest son, Arif Hussein Turabi, is, at the age of 20, studying in Karachi (annexe 2, # 11). He went to Karachi in 1998, after having passed Matric in Thalay, and F.Sc. in Skardu. He is now in the finishing stage of a B.A. in Commerce, and plans to continue his studies towards an M.A.. He has got an uncle in Karachi, Amir Ali, but he is not living with him, as he is staying in a flat with other Thalay-boys in Clifton (rent: 400 rupees). As opposed to most other students from Thalay, he is not working part time, but his father sends 2-3000 rupees per month.

His oldest daughter, aged 14, has passed 7th. class in private education, and it seems as if she is meant to pass Matric under the Iqbal Open University.

COMMENTS: Good interview, with FA giving a good and sincere impression - only flawed by the absurd and imagined profit of his shop (Yousaf: That information was totally wrong. In Thalay a "normal" annual profit is 30.000). With the benefit of hindsight it could seem as if the oldest son, who has failed to achieve any useful education, has been called home and parked in a shop, as some sort of lifetime position. Significant resources are invested in the education of the second son, and the father hopes that he will go for a GS position. And it could seem as if he has got money stowed aside for the bribe needed.

17) **Boa Anwar**

Boa Anwar is 37 years old, he comes from Burdas, and he has been away from Thalay for a total of 20 years. He went to Karachi in 1980 after having completed 9th. class at the high school in Khapulu. In Karachi he joined the Islamic education for eight years, finishing with a B.A., and during his study years he went to different houses preaching the Nurbakshi religion. He was staying in Punjab Colony, near Clifton, and during his stay in Karachi he did not hold any jobs, but received money from his father.

In 1990 he went to Islamabad where he could a position as a government servant. He is working at a government school for boys, and he is receiving a salary of 4000 rupees/month. For the time being only his son is living with him there - 4th. class in the government school. The rest of his family is now living in Burdas.

BA is very active preaching the Nurbakshi religion, and he is also working as a volunteer at the NAWAHI SUFIA International, Islamabad., the monthly newspaper of the Nurbakshis.

COMMENTS Different to undertake the interview outdoors, but useful info on monthly newspaper.

18) Ali Shah

Ali Shah is the head of an extended household encompassing 7 members, besides his wife the family of his son who holds a B.A. and works as a school teacher in Burdas. He is one of few at his age with any kind of education - middle school from Khapulu.

At 60, AS is a retired school teacher who since 1987, the year of his retirement, has been running a shop in Hadangus. He worked as a school teacher for 30 years in schools all over NA, and his manifold positions seemingly earned his son a position in Burdas where he has worked since 1990, after having got his F.A. in Karachi.

When AS retired, he got a pension of 150,000 rupees, went on pilgrimage to Mecca, built a house and started as a shopkeeper. He has now bought land in Skardu - 120,000 rupees for 1/2 kanal and intends to open a shop there next year. "Business is good", he states.

AS readily provides information on the cost of acquiring a position in government service. A post as school teacher would cost around 50,000 rupees, and a job in the police force would cost more like 80,000-100,000 rupees. But his own son got his position due to the outstanding services of his father.

COMMENTS So far the first one with an archway, however small, and his name, "This is the house of master Ali Shah", inscribed in English, thereby underlining his status. He has been very good at adjusting to a new life after retirement, giving much care to farming operations as well as business. Very talkative and knowledgeable, giving a number of interesting data on history as well as present day situations (as regards the "cost" of government jobs).

19) Ibrahim

Ibrahim is, at 60 years, the patriarchal head of a household of 17 members, living in Baltoro.

One son is a government servant, employed in the maintenance of the water supply scheme in Thalay. He has been employed there since the scheme started and he got the job because he knew someone.

Another son, holding a F.A., has since March 1998 been working as an unpaid candidate at the government school. He finished his education in 1995 after three years in Skardu and states that it is difficult to find a job. His father: "If you, in times of unemployment, don't know anyone, then who accepts you?"

Yet another son is living in Skardu - though his wife lives in Ibrahim's household. He is a watchman at the AKRSP, now holding a permanent job after two years as part-time worker.

An orphaned nephew, also a member of the household is also a government servant, working as a sweeper at the local dispensary in Baltoro.

COMMENTS

The example provides insight into the ways in which the household positions itself for job positions as government servants, often as part of a long-term strategy. (I could, already here, have gone more into the "price" for job positions, as especially the old man seemed quite outspoken).

Interviews with ex-servicemen

20) Hajji Murad

21) Hajji Ahmed

(interviewed together)

Two army pensioners, both from Burdas and both having performed their hajji - cost 150,000 rupees last year. Equally praising the Pakistan Army and maintaining that Baltistan is part of Pakistan. None of them were willing to find any fault with the Pak army. Hajji Ahmed had spent 15 years in the army, Hajji Murad 20 years - the latter also stating poverty as a reason for joining (besides the ever present wish to serve the country).

Hajji Ahmed: "First I served my country, then I served God" (pilgrimage), now he has built a house and spent the money. Hajji Ahmed keeps the money in the bank.

Both have got small households, Ahmed because the joint family has split, as the wives did not get along.

Both have received 3300 rupees monthly during the later years of their service, one however claiming that he started off with just 50 rupees per month. Now they receive approx. 900 rupees monthly in pension.

NB: Murad buys all his firewood, and this seems to have been a practice all his life. He pays 140 rupees/maund (40 kg) in Thalay and Skardu, using 40-50 maunds in one year. Murad buys extremely much *ata*, 36 bags for a household of four members, but he claims that he needs for guests and labourers. Somehow he seems quite willing to just live off his fortune quite pleasantly.

22) Ghulam Abbas,

Ghulam Abbas, aged 33, had, he claims joined the army at an age of 17 years in 1981, and he retired two years ago. It was his own choice to join, and he liked the army: "There we get food every day". He had received a pension of almost 300,000 rupees and invested 40,500 rupees in fields, altogether 4 kanals. But he had fallen out with his father, as he did not want the father to get the pension. As a result he and his family had left the household of his father, keeping only one or two fields.

23) Amin Cho

Amin Cho, aged 40, had joined the army in 1977, at the age of 18, and retired 4 years ago. Nuclear household, wife seemingly dead, cannot answer even simple questions. He has got one 100,000 rupees of his pension left, but he will have spent it quite soon.

Comment: A bit of a sad case, lost it seemed. The interview took place outdoors, near a group of men. One of them shouted something, and I asked Youssaf to translate: "Why do you talk to the two most hopeless men in the village". Not nice.

24) Ghulam Haider,

Ghulam Haider is almost deaf, 52 years old, with a wife only half his age, and two small daughters. Joined the army in 1972, aged 20, "in order to serve the nation", retired in 1986 - it seems that 15 years used to be the normal service time for the average soldier. A pension of 94,000 rupees has been spent on living, and now he seems to sustain his family on the little monthly pension of 400 rupees.

25) Mohammad Issa

Mohammad Issa is 47 years old, also heading a nuclear household. 18 years old, he joined the army in 1969, secretly as only the older brother knew. He retired in June 1987, with a pension of 100,000 rupees, which he invested in house construction and purchases of land in *broq* and *youl*. Seems a devout Muslim, returning from some sort of collective prayer meeting when we met him. Sincere, talkative, knowledgeable. He went to Karachi in 1997 and 1998 in order to work as a watchman, making 3,300 rupees per month. A soldier friend got him in touch with a man from Thalay, the latter helping him to the job. His 16 years old daughter has passed 8th. class in Khapulu, and she is now studying for metric at home. He propagates the construction of a girls school.

26) Ghulam Abass

Ghulam Abass is 50 years old, and he is from the village of Yearkehr, but now he lives with his family in Skardu. He does, however, retain his land here in Thalay, with his sister's family cultivating it on a 50-50 base. He joined the army in 1966, at the age of 17, having completed Middle School, and he retired with the rank of Sufidar (second in charge in the middle section) in 1994, with a pension of 600,000 rupees. Besides, he receives 2700 rupees monthly. He spent 300,000 on a house and a shop in Skardu, making 3,000 rupees monthly on rent. Interestingly, he bought land in Skardu already in 1987, so it would seem that he has been planning in advance - though he claimed that the decision was made in 1995. At the same time, in 1987, he married a local girl from Yearkehr. His children, two daughters and a son, aged 3-10 years, are attending Public School in Skardu - well, not the youngest - English Medium. "He wants them to become citizens". He is farming vegetables in Skardu, claiming that he has been doing this for four years, selling them at the local market, and he is also "making business".

Besides, three brothers also moved to Skardu in 1996, one having a government job, two working as guides

27) Mohammad Ali

Mohammad Ali is 46 years old and lives in Yearkehr. He gives long exhaustive answers, he is interested in making one understand, he shows a lot of interest in the Thalay book, and gives an altogether agreeable

impression. He joined the army in 1973 at the age of 18, after having married. 5 children, aged 7-20 years, nuclear household, but taking care of the wife's mother. He held the position of a hawaldar when retiring in 1991, with a pension of 170,400 rupees. Some were put into the bank, some used for partial financing of his brothers pilgrimage to Mecca. He also loaned money to his nephew for a jeep. Now he dedicates himself to farming, getting cash from his monthly pension of 560 rupees as well as, and probably foremost, the 4,500 rupees, his son makes as a carpenter. Now the son is moving to Skardu to work as a carpenter. He has managed to get a government job at a public school. He maintains that government jobs are better than private ones, because the former gives stable salary and pension after 25 years.

Impression: He has managed to get home, he has got re-established and found his footing. Another nuclear household.

28) Shukur

Shukur is 50 years old, and he lives in Hadangus. He is married, but childless, and lives with his brother in a joint household. As to reasons for joining, he does not mention "serving the nation", but states poverty, also at a more generalised level, covering the entire NA. Joined at the age of 18, in 1972 (does not add up with his age), after having married. Retired in 1987 with a pension of 94,000 rupees, and 400 rupees monthly. He has not found alternative employment, and he is spending his money on living.

COMMENT: To be pitied. He did not manage to get back and settle. Childless, therefore a failure?

29) Hussein

Hussein is 72 years old, and he is VO manager (president?) in Gagoderik. He joined the army back in 1948, as the *rajah* of Khapulu was enrolling soldiers for the fight against the Dogra regime. Altogether five men from Thalay were enlisted as soldiers - the other four are dead by now. He retired in 1971, but it seems that he did not receive any pension, except 50 rupees as some sort of gift. Now he has a monthly pension of 540 rupees. It seems as if it was not until 1985 that the entire payment and pension system in the army was reformed.

30) Ibrahim

Ibrahim is 38 years old, and he lives in a household with 13 members, in the village of Yearkhor. He had passed Middle School when he joined the army in 1977. He did not ask permission from anyone, because he wanted, as he says, "...to serve the nation". He claims that he was the only one from Thalay who joined the army that year. Life in the army was very good because it is good to serve the nation. His start salary was 300 rupees per month, but when he retired with the rank of hawaldar in 1999, he obtained a monthly salary of 7000 rupees. It seems as if he throughout his time in the army has been sending 2/3 of his salary home to his parents, while keeping 1/3 for his own needs.

He was married 15 years ago.

Despite his obvious love for the army, the parental demand weighed heavier. So when they needed him at home, he had to retire. He received a pension of 550,000 rupees, as well as 1,800 rupees per month. So far he is undecided as to how the money is to be spent or invested, but a hajj seems to have a high priority.

COMMENTS One of the pensioners who accepted his place in the hierarchy and came home when he was wanted. He has been sending money home throughout his time in the army. Despite his considerable wealth he has (so far) remained part of his parental household, and he does not seem inclined to go to Skardu with his wife and children.

31) Hajji Mohammad Ibrahim

(interview carried out in Ibrahim's shop in Skardu)

Hajji Mohammad Ibrahim is 52 years old, and he originates from the village of Burdas. He passed 8th. class in Khapulu before joining the army at the age of 20. Upon retirement in 1991, he moved with his family to Skardu. Asked as to why, he mentions the education of his children as the major reason, and two of his children are now attending the Army Public School in Gilgit.

He is living in a rented house in Skardu, and he is shopkeeper in a rented shop (monthly rent 2500, as opposed to 900 when he started in 1992). The shop – first Thalay shop in Skardu – is located quite attractively, in the bazaar at Hussein Chowk, next to the football ground. He was very reluctant to give any details concerning the profit that he makes at the shop, as well as the ways in which he has invested the 253,000 rupees that he received in pension upon retirement.

32) Hajji Ghulam Hussein

(interview carried out in the village of Chhorka, in Shigar.

Hajji Ghulam Hussein, aged 46, is the head of one of 12 households from Daltir, who have moved from Daltir to Shigar. A relative of his moved to Shigar approx. 80 years ago, and he himself got married and moved here 32 years ago. He explains that living conditions in Upper Thalay are more difficult, there is less land, and the area is fruitless. People are similar, but there is more fertile land in Shigar.

HGH retains land in Thalay, but he does not profit from it. His brothers are farming the land. His last visit to Daltir dates back to 1995, when he brought his mother to live with him in Shigar for 2 years (reflects the lasting commitments towards the older generation, even though separated for a long time).

HGH is the head of a household with 13 members - 6 sons, 4 daughters, his wife and his mother-in-law. All children are or have been going to school, two of the sons are attending public school, at a total cost of 500-600 rupees/month, as the education is better in public schools. One daughter went to school until 8th. class. Then she got married.

HGH owns a total of 130 kanal land, of which half is cultivated. When he bought the land in the 80s, he paid 1500 rupees/kanal, and 2000 rupees for 40 kanals uncultivated land. Besides barley and wheat, grown for domestic consumption, he cultivates potatoes that are sold directly to Rawalpindi, this year giving him an income of 50-60.000 rupees, and he has been selling since 1989.

Also since 1989 he has been running a shop, a general store, in Chhorka.

KARACHI: HGH went to Karachi in 1975-76. The Shigar House existed at that time, but he was staying outside Karachi, at Makran, where he was breaking stones and staying with people from Harikon and Kuenas.

Hajj: HGH went on pilgrimage in 1984, at a total cost of 72.000 rupees. Asked whether it was not mainly old people that should go on Had, he answers: "If you have the money, you have to go".

NB: For people from Upper Thalay Shigar has until the mid-80s in fact been more accessible than Skardu, so it has been more obvious to settle here than, as it is the case now, in Skardu. For Thalaypa, expansion in agricultural land is, however, still feasible in Shigar, with prices in the range of 20000-40000 rupees/kanal. Previously curd from Thalay was exchanged for apricots grown in Shigar.

33) Notes on conflict over water (from diary)

07.08.98:

Observer at daylong meeting with rural tourists from National Rural Support Programme, NRSP, based in Swat, the meeting taking place in Chundo, concerning dispute over water control. (Interestingly, everyone mentioned the guests as Aga Khan people, until I got there (It seems as if every official visitor is "Aga Khan" until something else has been proved - this testifying to the influence of the AKRSP)). Visit to the big valley mosque, financed by all the villages of the valley, but still under construction - as it also was back in 1995.

08.08.98:

Slow day. Walk with Youssaf who explains about water conflict between Yearkhor, his village, and Chundo (a bit troublesome that both my interpreters come from Yearkhor). It seems that a lack of water in spring, snow melt, is the biggest problem, in 1997 many crops got "burnt" in spring because of lacking water. Update on different issues. Hydro-el: During winter the villages of Thalay take turns in keeping the channel works free of ice.

13.08.98

Finally success at AKRSP. New regional manager, Mohammed Ali, local guy, quite agreeable. We get into talk concerning water disputes, his native village also being involved in one. Problem: many original documents now located in Indian-held Ladakh. Earlier: disputes were settled by local *Sharia* courts, presided by the local *Mullah*. Interestingly, according to the *quran*, all other courts are un-Islamic. Quote of the day: "When worldly things are in danger, the religious are very few". Post office, gift subscription on National Geographic for old Apu - 2 years. Afternoon: Polo, semi final of big tournament involving teams from all Baltistan. Ending up in protests and a few riots as the local team is losing.

Annexe II

Interviews with Thalay migrants in Karachi

1) **Anwar**

Anwar, oldest son of Ahmad Ali, is 25 years old, he is unmarried and comes from Gagoderik. He is from a nuclear household - mother, father, four brothers and three sisters.

He came to Karachi in 1986, at the age of 11, and he was staying with one of two uncles who at that time were living here (The uncle has since gone home).

A had not been going to school in Thalay, so he started in class one here in Karachi. He is now in the final year of an M.A. in Mass Communication, and he is writing his final thesis. But he considers it "a hobby".

He has been working in the fishing industry, for 5 years, managing and investing in boats, and he wants to start his own business in that line. He has saved 100,000 rupees that he has invested in this business.

A is not staying in the Thalay house, but he is sharing a house unit with a shigari, Elias, also in AL, but in the leased part. The monthly rent is 2000 rupees, and they have been living there for 6-7 months. He does, however, show up in the Thalay House on an almost daily basis, and Thalaypa visit in the evening, to watch movies on CD.

A visits Thalay once every 2-3 years, and he stays for a couple of months. He is expected to go home to get married and stay there after his marriage ("Finish education, goodbye Karachi" - says Ali). But he does not seem all that eager (Small wonder, he has spent more than half his life in Karachi, and seems altogether much less attached to his native valley than other of the Thalay people).

COMMENTS: Youssaf says "Mr. Anwar", signalling some sort of respect. He is, another first, wearing a leather jacket, even indoors. Showing off, somehow. I have met him a few times in the internet café. 28/1: Perhaps a wrong impression. He is, more than most of the other *Thalaypa*, somewhere between here and there, less firmly rooted in Thalay).

3/2 2001: I talk to A again as we wait for Eiliyas to return with a film - luckily, as I get the opportunity to review many of my earlier impressions. In fact A visits Thalay once every year, staying for the months of June and July. "Farming is my passion", he says, describing his everyday life as very tense. "It is my semi office", he says of the room we are sitting in. He is also supposed to find the time to write his Masters thesis in Mass Communication - about children and commercials. He has got a total of 6 months to write the thesis.

He is not absolutely adverse to the idea of returning home, but a more immediate future prospect is to find employment as government servant in Islamabad. It is closer to home, he says. An uncle, who was in Karachi at the time A arrived here, is now working there as a lawyer (but his family is in Thalay).

As opposed to most of the other Baltis, who have lived here for shorter time, he likes people in Karachi. As I ask closer, he differentiates, praises the mohajirs, who are educated, but he distrusts the Sindhis. The Bangladeshi fishermen are, he says, "professionals", and Pathan fishermen(!!!) are good and honest. Again he dislikes the Sindhis.

2) **Mohammad Ali Mullah**

Mohammad Ali Mullah, oldest son of Ali, is 25 years old, he is unmarried and comes from Daltir.

He left Thalay in 1993, but first went to Lahore where he passed Matric. in a madrassa (thence the nickname "mullah").

He started working as a cook apprentice in 1995, and in 1997 he moved to Karachi where he could get a better job. He is now working in a restaurant, making Chinese and Continental dishes, and he has a salary of approx. 6000 rupees per month.

MAM has been staying in the Thalay House since 1998, and he has no relatives in Karachi. He returns home every 1 or 2 years and stays for 3-4 months, but he is sending money home every month, as well as saving here. MAM seems quite determined to return home after one more year, to settle down and work as a farmer in Daltir. It seems as if some sort of love story is involved in all this (though the other Thalay boys are more informative on this than he himself).

COMMENTS: MAM seems, dressed in jeans and pants, and smoking, fairly removed from his religious education, an issue that he does not refer to even once. He seems more attached to his homeland than Anwar, and determined to go home at a certain time. The stay in Karachi is, it seems, rather a way of accumulating money that is to be invested in a "traditional" future (in fact, I met MAM the first time one year ago, when I visited together with Hassan Shahd).

3) **Sheir Ali**

Sheir Ali, oldest son of Mohammad, is 26 years old, he is unmarried and comes from the village of Yearkhor.

He came to Karachi in September 1992 for studying, after having passed Matric in Dhagoni. For the first couple

of years he was staying with his uncle, Yussuf Noorani (#15) who has been living in Karachi with his family since the 1980s and is working as Islamic teacher in the private City School.

For 6 years SA was living in another rented Thalay House in PNT Colony where 4-5 men from Thalay were living together.

SA is studying part 2 of Bachelor of Law (LLB) at the Law College, and he wants to become an advocate in order to "help the poor". The study fee is 8000 rupees per year that SA pays himself, and he is going to college after work, from 5-7 pm. at night.

Since 1998 he has been working as a typist, making 3500 rupees per month. It is a full time job, from 9 to 5 every day. But he has had a score of different jobs – kitchen hand, lift operator, etc. - from 1994 onwards. For the first two years he was supported by his uncle.

SA is, it seems, formally married to a girl, a cousin of his, from Belghar. This does, however, give rise to a heated debate, because Naki has been read, but the girl has not been brought to his house, and they have not spend a night together. SA does, however, feel that he is married. The girl is the choice of his father ("It is my father's choice", he says - "and mine", he adds).

COMMENTS: Pleasant guy, eager to discuss, with good knowledge of English. Yet another type - the idealist(?), gaining knowledge in order to pursue goals in the local arena. Anyway, he seems eager to return home upon completion of his studies, and very willing to comply with the marital scheme that his father has for him.

4) Mohammad Ibrahim Shahid

Muhammad Ibrahim Shahid is 32 years old, he is married and comes from Burdas. He came to Karachi 18 years ago, in 1982, for studying purposes. It was his own choice, as he had finished 9th. class in Khapulu. In Karachi, MIS knew one villager from Burdas, Issa, who has since then returned home. From the very start MIS was living in Abessinia Lines, with other Thalay people.

He completed his F.A. in 1986, and his B.A. in 1989. For the duration of his studies he worked in a hotel, but after his B.A. graduation he got a job as an accountant in the fishing business. He is still working in the same company, making 8-9000 rupees per month.

MIS bought his house 11 years ago, at a cost of 130.000 rupees. He bought it from one Ghulam Haider, another Balti who was returning home. Like the entire mohallah, the house is katchi, and according to MIS the basic amenities, gas, water and electricity, are the same now as 11 years ago

He got married 9 years ago, to a girl from Burdas, but she did not move to Karachi until 2.5 years ago. They have a girl aged 2-3 years.

MIS has been sub-letting a room to migrants from Burdas since 1993, at a total monthly rent of 1.200 rupees.

Water and electricity were never meant to be included, but they are now, as the boys never paid for these amenities (so he complains, while everyone in the room, including himself, is laughing).

He has not been to Thalay for the past three years, he does not feel a need, because his family is here. As he is the oldest son, his father thinks that he should return home, but he does not want to. There is no job to be had in Thalay. He does, however, remit money home, around 2000 rupees/month.

COMMENTS: A well-known character, so it seems, in the Baltistani Mohallah. When I mention him, Mehedi and Shigar immediately refers to his 'contours' – MIS being rather fat.

5) Bahadur

Bahadur, son of Mohammad Hassan, is 25 years old, he is unmarried and comes from the village of Tasso. He is the oldest son in a household of 7 members.

BAH went to Karachi 9 years ago for education. At that time, he says, there was no high school in Thalay. An uncle of his, Mr. Yasin, was at that time living in Karachi where he stayed for a total of 9-10 years, before returning in 1997 - he is now in tourist business. The uncle, whom BAH was staying with, was at that time renting the house where the Thalay boys presently are living - it is owned by a man from Kharmang.

In the period 1991-95, BAH was only studying, while living with and being financed by his uncle. He passed his Matric in 1995 - after having completed 6th. class in Thalay. After that he went into business, buying and selling ladies' purses. First he worked as an employee of Basharat Ali from Burdas (#6), then for one year as his partner before they split again. He is now working on his own and is very reluctant to talk about his profits, but it seems as if he is remitting an annual average of 10.000 rupees home to his family.

BAH is supposed to go home in order to get married at some stage, possibly next year. He goes home to Thalay every year, towards the end of June. His father wants him to come home and stay permanently, but BAH wants to carry on with his business in Karachi.

6) Basharat Ali

Basharat Ali, son of Mohammad Ibrahim, is 24 years old, he is unmarried, and he comes from the village of Burdas. He is the oldest (and only) son in a household of just three, and his father would not allow him to go to Karachi, so in 1992 he had to run away, because he wanted to go here for study and work purposes - after having passed class 8 in Thalay. It was not until after he had passed his F.A. in 1996 that he went home on a visit the first time. Now he has been home altogether 3-4 times

In Karachi he has all along been staying in the house of Ibrahim, who is his cousin.

He worked for three years in a shop, also the purse business, and then started on his own, and he has all along had 2 employee's working for him. Right now it is two Burdas boys. He does not comment much on the partnership with Bahadur, but it does not seem as if he likes him a lot. It would seem as if BA is better off, having also bought a house unit at a cost of 150.000. He had only half that amount himself, but got loans from friends and relatives in the Balti community, Ibrahim being one of them. He has later paid back these loans. Over 2 years he states that he has made 4-500.000 rupees. Last year his father visited him, and BA gave him 100.000 rupees to take back home. Now the father has started building a house in Burdas, and BA is also expected to return home and get married at some stage. BA states that "if he marries here in Karachi, his father will get much more angry than he was when he ran away.

7) Habib Mullah

Habib Mullah is the oldest son of Abdul Karim, he is married, and he comes from the village of Baltoro. He is 42 years old and left Thalay in 1981. HM spent 6 years in Jhelum in the Punjab, in order to become Islamic Master. His father is mullah in Baltoro, and it was his idea that his son should go to the Punjab. But it was not, states HM, entirely according to plan that his son ended up converting to Sunni Islam.

After having become Islamic Master in Jhelum, he went to Karachi in order to continue his religious education. He did not have any relatives here, but was staying with Thalay people in Mahmoodabad. 2-3 village men from Baltoro were in Karachi at that time, but there were no contacts due to religious differences. He has been working and living in his present place, the *Ahl-I-hadith* mosque in Fatima Jinnah Colony, since 1993, and he is staying in a tiny closet on the roof. HM receives a salary of 3.500 rupees per month, and he remits money home regularly.

HM married in 1991, to a girl from Baltoro. It was the choice of his family, and she is Nurbakshi, but that did not seem to matter. They have got two children, a son aged 9 years and attending government school in Thalay, and a daughter aged 2. He would like to bring his children here when they grow older, and he is ambivalent as to whether he wants to stay in Karachi or return to Thalay. There is air, water and peace in Thalay, but the education and job is here. As it is now, he goes home on visit once a year, staying for 2 months.

According to HM, the Nurbakshis are more into the worshipping of characters than ideas. He maintains some sort of contacts with people from Thalay, meeting them every one or two months - and he embraced both Youssaf and Bahadur when we met. He had not been told about the meeting of Thalay people on Sunday 21/1 - but as the meeting turned out to have a religious perhaps, maybe that was quite obvious.

COMMENTS: Kind, bear-like man, very friendly and forthcoming. Like Ibrahim, who had also settled permanently in Karachi, he had developed a certain, un-Baltiesque corpulence. The meeting with HM also confirms the unconcerned way in which the Baltis tend to deal with sectarian differences (at least as long as it is one of their own). He distances himself from the path that his father, the mullah, represents, but he still agrees to marry the Nurbakshi girl whom his father chooses for him.

8) Hassan

Hassan is 48 years old, he is a widower, and he comes from the village of Hadangus. He passed 5th. class in Thalay and 6th. class at the Middle School in Khapulu, before he went to Karachi 30 years ago. His family was very poor at that time, and he cites poverty as his reason for going to Karachi.

In Karachi he never got around to studying, because he ended up in what he terms as "bad company" with Pakistanis with whom he was working in some textile company for 3-4 years. Hassan has been staying in Abessinia Lines all the time that he has been living in Karachi. For the last 12 years he has been working in an office where another Balti is employed as engineer. The monthly salary is 4.000 rupees - he doesn't say, but shows four fingers.

In 1976 he married, a woman from Khapulu, who had been living in Karachi all her life. He describes the first years of his marriage as happy. As they were childless for around 10 years, they were able to save some money,

and he purchased a plot of land in Abessinia Lines 20 years ago. Here he built a house, investing a total of 110,000 rupees.

His wife died 5-6 years ago, and he is now left with 4 children, aged 14, 10, 8 and 6 years. The oldest son is, he says, mentally retarded and has never received any education, the second son is attending 5th. class, and the two youngest, a boy and a girl, are lodging and boarding in an Islamic school. But he also states that he has had mental problems since the death of his wife.

Hassan has never in his 30 years in Karachi returned home to Thalay, he has never remitted money home, and he has never received any visits from his relatives in Hadangus (shortly after I touched upon his relations with his native area, he said that now it was enough and that he would not talk anymore).

COMMENT: Interesting confrontation, maybe because of all the things that remained unsaid. Hassan is the first Thalaypa I have met who has no contacts whatsoever to his native village. He said that they were very poor, and he left because of poverty, but his family still had the money and the foresight to give him the maximum education available in Thalay at that time, and send him to Khapulu for further schooling. There is an untold story behind his exit from Thalay, and the lack of communication during all these years.

He embraced the villager from Hadangus, whom we had brought along, showing some signs of recognition, and then he burst into a long monologue, as if he wanted to give the story of his life in one long outburst and thus avoid further questions. Have his two youngest children been sent to Islamic school because he does not have the means to feed them?

An unhappy and bitter man, bitter because of the way life has treated him, disconnected from his past, discontented with his present. Sad sight.

9) Ali Yohar

Ali Yohar, son of Abdu Salaam, is 24 years old, he is married and comes from the village of Yearkehr. He is the second-oldest son in a household of seven members - the family of his older brother, and AY's wife. His mother and father died many years ago, and his older brother is now working as a carpenter in Thalay.

AY went to Karachi 10 years ago. He cites studies and work, as well as poverty in the family. It was his own decision, but his older brother was, so he says, happy that he went. He had many relatives here at that time, Sheir Ali (#3) being a cousin, and when he arrived in Karachi he was staying in Mahmoodabad. But for the last 8 years he has been staying with other Thalay people in Defence, paying a total of just under 1000 rupees per month for food and lodging.

AY passed Matric in 1994, and he started, but did not complete his FA - doesn't like to study. Asked why he did not return home when he finished his studies, he still cites poverty as a problem.

AY has been working in an ice cream parlour in Defence for 10 years, ever since arriving from Thalay. Another Balti, a Chorbatpa, was working there when he arrived, and now one of his house mates from Defence is also working there. He used to be making around 4000 rupees/month, but now it is only 2500, as he is also working as a tailor apprentice. It is a Punjabi tailor where he has been working for 2 months, receiving no money, but only training. When the training is completed, he will return home.

AY got married in Thalay 2-3 years ago, to a girl from Broqpa. He returns home once every 2 years, and remits money, 5-6,000 rupees, home once a year. I ask him what he would do if he had enough money. But he would still stay with his family in Thalay. Home is better, it is motherland.

COMMENTS: Though in his mid-twenties, AY looks very much like a boy. Somehow it seems as if he has lost his sense of direction during his stay in Karachi. Education was a purpose but he dropped that years ago, and has been, so it could seem, adrift. The apprenticeship is a purpose, something he can take home. But poverty remains an issue, it was the cause for his departure, but perhaps also the reason why he cannot return home without having learnt a trade or having graduated.

10) Mohammad Hussein

Muhammad Hussein, son of Murad Ali, is married and comes from the village of Chundo. At 34, he is the oldest son of his father, and he has passed Middle School.

MH went to Karachi 15 years ago. It was his own choice to go, and he was looking for work. First he spent six months in Lahore where he did not find any employment. In Karachi he got his present job at a private hospital where he is still working. Besides, he has also had a morning job, working as a dental assistant, for 10 years. He lived for 14 years in North Nazimabad, but he has recently moved to Iqbal Nagar.

MH was married eight years ago, to a woman from Thalay. They had one child, who died. His wife arrived in Karachi 2 months ago, for medical treatment. It is not clear how long she will stay, it depends on the treatments.

MH visits at home regularly, and he remits money home every year - 4-10.000 rupees. His father commenced the construction of a new house for the joint family last year. But whereas MH's family is supposed to be part of the household, he has no knowledge of the costs, and he has no idea of the actual costs.

11) Arif Hussein

Arif Hussein is the second-oldest son of Fidar Ali, a retired government servant from Tagary (annexe 1, #). AH is 20 years old (but seems older), he is the second-oldest son in a household of 10 members, he is unmarried, and before coming to Karachi he passed F.SC. in Skardu.

In October 1998 AH went to Karachi for studying. As he was not too fond of science, he settled for B.Com. here in Karachi, and he started studying immediately upon arrival. He is now in the final year of his B.Com.

For the first year in Karachi AH was living with his uncle North Nazimabad. When the uncle returned home with his family, AH went to live in Punjab Colony with his present house mates.

AH first worked in 'Snoopy', an ice cream parlour where Ali Yohar (#9) also has been working for many years. When he left North Nazimabad, he started working in a teashop, owned by a Karachi *wallah*, in Saddar, and he is still employed there. He normally works full time, 10am-8pm, making 2.500 rupees monthly. But when he attends college, he cuts down to 6 hours, attending classes first. His father also supports him, sending around 500-1000 rupees per month.

AH is so far unmarried, and during his time in Karachi he has so far not visited Thalay. He "will see about going home" when he finish his studies, after 2-3 years, and he talks about setting up a business, not in Thalay where his brother is a shopkeeper, but in Skardu.

Despite his extremely noisy working place in the middle of Saddar, he likes life in Karachi. It is a good place for students, and also for other people. But he does not like the ways the young generation in the city is behaving. They do not respect their parents, or their relatives.

COMMENTS: Calm, confident, forthcoming, a man who knows his worth, in that way very contrary to AY who is older, looks younger and less 'resolved'. He is the successful second son of a father who himself went out, and who has been sending his sons out. The older was sent to Lahore, but less successfully, so now he is shop keeping in Thalay. AH is one of the few who is supported from home, but again, his father, one of the first government servants in Thalay, is investing in the future. Now AH might finish his studies in time and return home. He attributes his good English to time spent with his (awful) uncle.

12) Ibrahim Shakir

Ibrahim Shakir, the 3rd. oldest son of Hassan, is 19 years old, he is unmarried and comes from the village of Broqpa. An older brother has completed Matric and has joined the Pak Army, and IS finished 8th. class in Thalay before his father sent him to Lahore.

IS went to Lahore in 1995, for Islamic Education. But he himself was more interested in "modern" education, and he wanted to "see the city". His father told him that he could do as he liked.

In 1996 IS arrived in Karachi where he was staying in the Thalay House in Manzoor Colony for 2 years.

Ghulam Ali, his brother in law and the first man from Broqpa to settle in Karachi, had moved there two years earlier, in 1994. He is still living here, working as a security guard in a private company.

IS finished his Matric here in Karachi, and in 1999 he started I.Com. He is a private student, and his final exam is in June 2001 (didn't sound very convincing on this).

For the first two years of his stay, IS was supported by his brother in law, but in 1998 he started working in a grocery in Ghizer Colony where he is still working. It was Ali Yohar who got him the job. He is working full time, 10am-9pm, making a monthly salary of 3.200 rupees. IS says that he studies in the mornings and the evenings.

IS remits a little money home, around 1-2000 rupees per year, and he has so far visited home two times during his years here in Karachi.

IS seems very fond of city life - "every facility is available" - and he has not got any idea about when he is going to return home.

COMMENTS Seems more adrift than Arif Hussein, less interested in his studies, and not really a man of many opinions. Sporting a "French beard". One of just three men from Broqpa who live in Karachi, and his father is actively involved in educating his sons, instead of just casual labour in Skardu and Gilgit, as is otherwise the case in Broqpa.

13) Mohammad Ali Shan

Mohammad Ali Shan is the oldest son of Mudin Niazi, and he comes from the village of Tagary (cousin of Arif Hussein). He is 25 years old, and married.

It was his own choice to go to Karachi in 1990. But he refers to poverty, to his position as the oldest son in the family, and his responsibility to supply. His uncle Hasan Askari was, and still is, living here and is working as an Islamic teacher. MAS wanted education in a madrassa, but he felt that he had to work.

A friend of his uncle owned a purse factory where MAS got a job. He is still working in the same place, but from a salary of 1000 rupees in 1990, he has risen to 5000 rupees now.

Over 10 years he has, he says, remitted 2 lakh rupees home, thereby (co)financing the construction of a new house for his family as well as his marriage. MAS was married three years ago, to a girl from Tagary. She was his own choice - he stresses that he himself went to the family of the girl as an arbitrator, a role normally played by another family member. So far no children, but one has died.

Over his 10 years in Karachi, MAS has visited home 3 times, and last year, 2000, he spent 7 months in Thalay - and during that period he also worked as a porter for tourists. He is undecided as to when to go home for good. Employment is still a problem at home, all hh-members are "unemployed", except a younger brother who works with tourists. He would also like to take his wife to Karachi, but he cannot bear the expenses. He estimates that he would need 3-4000 rupees per month in order to provide, and he still wants to save money and remit money home.

COMMENTS: A good example of how domestic obligations remain the overriding imperative, in no way diminishing over time. A duty to work instead of getting education, to send substantial amounts home. Even now, if he took his wife to Karachi, he would still find it necessary to remit money to his family. And he knows his position in Thalay - there are just no jobs to be had for an uneducated man.

14) Himayat Ali

Himyat Ali, son of Issa Khan, is 18 years old, he is unmarried and comes from Broqpa - nephew of Ibrahim (#12). He has passed F.A. in Skardu and arrived in Karachi just three months ago in order to pursue further education - B.A. part one - and he would like to do an M.A. in English. He is not working, but receives 2000 rupees per month from his father.

15) Mohammad Hussein

Mohammad Ali, son of Mohammad Hussein, is born in Karachi, but his father originates from Tagary. MA is 22 years old, the oldest son in a household of 7 who live in Garoo. But MA is, along with his brother, living in the house of Hajji Jan, because they are studying.

His father, now 60 years old, arrived in Karachi 37 years ago, whereas his mother has been in Karachi for 24 years.

MA was born in Karachi, has lived all his life in Garoo, but the last year in Mahmoodabad. He has passed Matric, and is now doing part 2 of a B.Com.. He hopes to Continue and make a M.Com afterwards. He is not working part time, only studying.

MA has visited Thalay a total of three times, 1993, 1994, and 1998, every time staying 2 months. He was not very happy to be there, as he did not have any friends in Thalay, and he does not know his relatives. On the third occasion, in 1998, he went because he had to pick up his Domicile Certificate.

MA speaks a little Balti, but he does not get much of a chance to practice, as he is speaking Urdu to his parents.

COMMENTS: Very friendly and sincere guy, good command of English, fashionable, as he is sporting a "Titanic haircut". An example of the generation that is born outside Baltistan and slowly loses the language and the link to the homeland of their parents.

16) Mohammad Jussuf Noorani

Mohammad Jussuf Noorani, son of (the late) Abdu Salaam, is 33 years old, he is married, and he comes from the village of Yearkhor. One of his 3 brothers is still living at home, farming the lands (annexe 1, # xx). 2 other brothers are living in Gilgit and Hunza - one of whom he has not seen for more than 20 years.

MJN went to Punjab for Islamic education in 1978. He spent 2 years in Jhelum and Rawalpindi, studying and living in Sunni madrassas. It was "own choice and family's choice", all expenses were born by the madrassa, he did not receive any money from home.

In 1982 MJN went to Karachi for further Islamic education, as well as a Matric and BA. He knew Thalay people, Noorani and Ibrahim from Baltoro, but he was spending most of his time at the Sunni madrassa, mainly

studying there, but also at the Nurbakshi madrassa. In 1985-86 he was teaching in Sunni houses, receiving around 5000 rupees per month. He started his Matric after finishing his Islamic education.

MJN was married in 1995 in Thalay, and his wife went with him to Karachi after the marriage. They have got one son, aged five.

MJN is now working as an Islamic teacher at a private school, so far for 3 years, at a salary of 6000 rupees. The family has recently moved to Mahmoodabad, to a 3-room flat, where they are paying a rent of 2500 all inclusive.

MJN has returned home once every 5 years since leaving in the late 1970s, but since marrying he has not been at home at all. His wife has visited at home once. He is, however, not disinclined to go home, if he can get a job as government servant in Thalay.

COMMENT: Very friendly man, interview conducted in good atmosphere. Does not seem very close to the rest of his joint family, perhaps because his father is dead. Otherwise it testifies well to the way that they do not seem to bother about going home when the nuclear family is here, around them. No obligation, as father is dead. First Balti I have seen with old-fashioned haircut. In many ways a different world - never seen as movie, he says.

17) Ali Naqi

Ali Naqi, son of Ali Khan (and brother of Farman who has returned to Thalay from Karachi (annexe 1, # xx), is 26 years old, he is married and comes from the village of Baltoro, from a household of 18 members.

AN went to Karachi in 1988, at the age of 14 - he says that he wanted education, but his face betrays that it was, more than anything, the city that attracted him. As he had relatives living in the city, he could stay with them, in Mahmoodabad.

In 1992 AN passed Matric, and in 1995 FA, staying with relatives and receiving monthly allowances from his father, he did not have to engage in part-time work. But he dropped out during the first year of his BA. Ghulam Ali (# xx) got him work in 'Copper kettle' (restaurant) where he is still working. From a start salary of 1400 (+ 1600 in tips) in 1995, he has now risen to 2500 (and 200 rupees per day in tips).

AN got married in 1996, August 22nd, in Thalay. He married a niece of Mohammad Ali Ibrahim (#25), also from Baltoro, who had been living in Karachi all her life. They now have 2 children - one daughter and one son - and they are living in a flat in Mahmoodabad.

Before marrying, AN went home on visit every 2-3 years. But since the marriage he has not been going, and he does not really seem that keen.

COMMENTS: Interview carried out in the house of Noorani. Friendly, relaxed man dressed in trainers and a La Coste t-shirt. His nuclear family is here, and he is not really all that interested in the family at home. Large household anyway, so no pressing obligations.

18) Said Mehedi Shah

Said Mehedi Shah, son of Said Ali, is 32 years old, he is married and comes from the village of Tasso (interview with brother Ibrahim (annexe 1, # xx)). After having passed 8th. class in Dhagoni in 1982, SMS went to Karachi for studying, at the age of 14. A cousin of his, Said Mohammad Shah, was at that time living in Karachi. But the cousin returned to Baltistan in 1988, to a posting as GS, headmaster in Matchuro just outside Hushey Valley (visit with Murad in 1999).

SMS was staying and studying for 7-8 years in a Sunni madrassa - where Jussuf Noorani was also studying. He was also teaching in the madrassa. Towards the end of this stay he also got the government service job that he still is holding, in a government school in Shershah Colony, Karachi West, making a salary of 5000 rupees per month.

Even after getting the GS-job he kept studying, and passed his MA in 1992-93, and a B.Ed. (education) in 1994, at a college of education. And in 1988 he spent two month doing a course in Arabic Literature at Medina University in 1988.

SMS has been living in Iqbal Nagar for many years, living in the house of the Kuenas man, without paying rent. SMS was married in July 1989, in Thalay, and he has got two children. 4 years ago he took his family to Karachi, but his wife has returned home, because she wanted to look after her parents. He is going home once a year, staying for a couple of months, going home for good at the age of 60.

COMMENTS: First blue-eyed *Thalaypa*, very friendly man commanding some English. A Said, from a family of preachers, he has been sticking to religious education, however supplemented with "secular" courses, and he exhausted educational opportunities before leaving home. Two brothers living at home, so nothing that obliges

him to return for the time being. Would have liked to carry on the interview, but most of it was watched by 12-15 men.

19) Murad

Murad, son of Ibrahim, is 32 years old, married and comes from the village of Burdas. He passed 6th. class in Thalay.

M went to Karachi in 1985, for further education and work. It was, he says, his own choice, and he had no relatives here in Karachi. During his first stint in Karachi, he was staying in the house of Ibrahim. In 1986 he carried on his education, and he passed Matric in 1989. But he did not carry on studying due to, so he says, "house problems".

M had, however, started working already shortly after his arrival, in 1986. He worked as a house servant in a house, and seemingly did so well that the owner asked him to go with him to Dubai in 1991. He stayed there for 5.5 years, returning in 1997.

Before leaving he bought a plot in Abessinia Lines where he also had a house made in 1994, investing a total of 150,000 rupees. Upon arrival from Dubai he had a house constructed for his family in Burdas. In 1997 he also got married, to a local girl. The couple has two boys, but he does not take his family to Karachi, because he needs his wife to look after his parents. Presently he has got 2 brothers living in Karachi, Mohammad Ali and Ahmed Ali, both of them living in the house of Ibrahim.

M again lives and works in Karachi, cooking and driving in the same house as pre-1991, and making 5,500 rupees per month. He visits home once a year, staying 2-6 months, and he sends remittances home to his family.

COMMENTS: Another interview carried out in the company of a lot of people, congregated in one room of the Mehedi Shah-house. Has been to the Gulf, but remains rooted in the homeland, having invested in a big house, very centrally located house in Burdas. Skipped his education - interestingly, I start asking people, who have "only" completed Matric, why they have not continued their education.

20) Boa Ali

Boa Ali, oldest son of the late Ghulam Ali, is 36 years old, married and comes from the village of Gagoderik. In 1981, when he had completed class 4 in Thalay, his father allowed his younger brother to go to a madrassa in Jhelum, Punjab. But BA ran away, he had arranged to meet his brother in Belghar, and they went to Punjab together, and stayed here for 2 years. It was not until 1983, when he heard of the death of his father, that BA returned home. But he left again, as a younger brother could take charge at home.

The two brothers went to Karachi where they were living and studying at a Sunni madrassa for 5 years, without working. But then the madrassa was closed, as it could not bear the expenses for the students. The brothers then moved to Defence where BA worked as a house servant for 5 years. He also passed his Matric in 1988. Around 1990 he started teaching at the Tuition Centre where he still is working, making a salary of 4,000 rupees per month.

In 1991 the brothers moved to Pakhtunabad in Mango Pir - a neighbourhood dominated by Pashtuns, but also with other ethnic groups. The mohallah is 13 years old, located approx. 2 km from Iqbal Nagar, but away from the road. The plots were cheaper here, BA says. They paid 11,000 rupees in 1991, and now a plot costs around 80,000 rupees.

It was not until he had bought his property that BA 'converted' his engagement, from 1985, into marriage in 1990. He moved his wife to Karachi in 1991, but she returned in order to look after her parents in 1995 (according to other sources it was because she did not get along with the family of BA's brother). She has just returned again, in late December 2000. The couple has 2 children, 2 boys. The wife is sick, however, complaining over pains all over her body.

In 1995 all the property of the joint family was divided, and at the same time BA and his brother also divided their property here in Karachi. Now BA has invested in one more house in Pukhtunabad, it is let for the time being. Though his immediate family is in Karachi, BA holds on to his property in Thalay. "If you sell your father's land, you have no security at home. It is a shame to sell the land. The villagers will not allow it."

COMMENTS: Kind man, very settled, it seems, in this village outside the city, but still part of Karachi. Has invested here, doing well, it seems. No father to refer to, and respect, left as a big boy, and has not, it seems, looked bag. Seems settled. Don't quite understand all this business about his brother (should talk to Anwar, his village)

21) Said Ibrahim

Said Ibrahim is 44 years old, he is married, and he comes from the village of Tagary, but he has not visited Thalay since leaving in 1965.

An older brother had been living here for approx 2 years, and his father had died in 1963. So after a visit back in Thalay in 1965, the brother took both their mother and Said Ibrahim to Karachi. They settled in Garoo where only one *Thalaypa*, Apu Ali, was living at that time. SI estimates that a total of 15 from Thalay, all single men, were living in Karachi in the mid-60s.

SI is a GS, working as a driver in a coach company, as he has been doing all along, and he is living with his family in a government house in Garoo. He got married in 1986, to a girl from Khapulu who was also living in Karachi. The couple has 6 children, three sons and three daughters, aged 0.2-13 years. All school seeking children, two girls and a son, are attending English Medium schools - fees of 300 rupees per child per month. At home he speaks Urdu to his children, but they do, he says, speak Balti.

SI has, as mentioned, never been back to Thalay. One sister is married in Hadangus, and there are cousins and uncles. The land is farmed by relatives.

COMMENTS: Chance meeting in Pukhtunabad where SI is visiting, together with family members, as well as a nephew, a Titanic guy whom I first met in the house of Hajji Jan, in Mahmoodabad. Himself having only passed Middle School, SI makes sure that his children get the best possible education - as does his brother, it seems. So even though SI has not visited at home since 1965, he maintains contacts with Thalaypa. His brother, Hussein (#15), seems to have maintained more of a contact.

22) Ibrahim

Ibrahim comes from the village of Daltir, he is married and he has been in Karachi for 10 years, 7 years with family, a household totalling 12 members. According to his son, they have not visited at home during these 7 years.

The family was living in Garoo, but moved to Mango Pir 9 months ago - according to the son because it was difficult to find jobs in Garoo. It seems as if the move has followed upon the marriage of one of the older sons - married to a girl from Khapulu who is born in Karachi.

They are now living in a rented house in Pukhtunabad, the father and the older sons working in a nearby factory. It seems as if none of the family members have received any kind of education.

COMMENTS: Interesting interview, despite the absence of Ibrahim, and the short talk with his son. The first family unit that has moved to Karachi without really having any established base here. Why did they leave Thalay? From the outside it seems like a quite abrupt move.

23) Mohammad Jussuf

(Mohammad Jussuf was not present, in Saudi Arabia, so I talked to Hajji Sheir Ali, his younger brother.

MJ is 60 years old, he is married and he comes from Yearghor. After finishing Middle School in Khapulu, he went down country. In 1965 he became Diploma Engineer in Sialkot. MJ then moved on to Karachi in 1968, and in 1970 he married a girl born in Karachi, but originating from Belghar in Baltistan. The couple has five children (see below).

MJ went to the Soviet Union one year in the start of the 70s to work in a steel mill, and throughout the 70s he worked at the Pakistan Steel Mill in Bin Kaysim, some sort of joint venture with the Soviet Union.

In 1981 MJ went to Saudi Arabia for the first time, staying for 2 years, and that is largely what he has been doing ever since. These years he spends 11 months every year in Saudi Arabia and one month in Pakistan.

MJ bought the plot for their present house in Mahmoodabad in 1980, and it was finished in 1990, at a total cost of around 5 lakhs. He has also built a house in Thalay. MJ last visited Thalay in 2000, during his 1 month vacation. He visited alone, but it seems that he pays annual visits to Thalay.

SON, 25 YEARS: He is a doctor, MBBS, unmarried. He studied at the Medical College in Bahawalpur for 6-7 years, and then he worked at the Service Hospital in Lahore for 2 years, doing house visits. He has recently gone to the US, for studies in New York. He knows no Balti, and shows no interest, and he has paid two visits to Thalay, with all the family.

DAUGHTER, 23 YEARS: She has passed her B.A., but has "stayed in house", does not work. "She is house girl", says Sheir Ali. She has recently married a Shigari, Asif Ali Shigari, who has been living with his family for 10 years in USA. He is working as a shopkeeper in the family shop.

SON, 21 YEARS: He has been studying MBBS for three years at the Medical University in Hyderabad. He is not married, and he speaks Balti.

DAUGHTER 20: She is also under education, doing a MA. in Economics (honours) at Karachi University. She is not married, and she speaks Balti.

SON, 18 YEARS: He is a student at the Architecture College in Lahore where he has started recently. He speaks Balti.

COMMENTS: I almost pity Hajji Sheir, that mild and modest person amongst so much brilliance (# xx). It is also a large age gap between the older and younger brother. Mohammad Jussuf has moved on, it seems. He has built a house in Thalay, but is settled - though absent most of the time - in Karachi with his nuclear family. He has provided quality education to his children, though for the oldest daughter it seems most of all like an additional asset for her marriage - rightly so, as it has landed her in the US. Maybe the realization of the typical Pakistani dream, rather than a Balti one.

24) Ashan

Ashan, son of Abdu Salam, is 33 years old, married and comes from the village of Daltir. He is the oldest son in a household that now has 6 members, his father died 5 years ago.

AS went to Karachi in 1985, because he could get both a job and an education here. He knew villagers and people from Thalay in Karachi, but he had no relatives here.

He has been staying in Ghulam Hadith, in this same house, ever since arriving. He came here in the company of other Thalay people, and stayed (didn't get the full story of that).

Job wise, he worked as a pipe fitter in a private company from 1985-91. He received a start salary of 2000,- and finished with 5-6000,-. In 1992 he applied for and got a GS-job as the steel mills. He is now working a 5 day-week, receiving a salary of 6000 rupees.

During his first years here AS also passed Matric, not going to college, but studying as a private.

AS married in 1991 in Karachi, he married a girl, born here, but from Khapulu. It was, he says, his own choice. They have got one son. For the time being, they are not living with him, but with her family in Islamabad. When they returned from a visit in Thalay last year in August, they stayed there.

AS has bought a plot in nearby Shah Latif Town, 80 square meters at a cost of 25.000 rupees. Other Baltis have also bought plots there. He intends to build a house in 2 years time, but is waiting for others to start too.

Amenities like water and sewage are missing. He has also built the "customary" house in his native village, last year.

Only 3 Balti families and 8-10 single Balti men are living here, no other *Thalaypa*, but AS is going to Saddar regularly on Fridays, so he meets Thalay people at the mosque. He is also a member of the Thalay Welfare Organisation.

COMMENTS: Far out in more than one way, apart from the bus ride of more than one hour. He is living here, in one of the steel mill settlements, far from his family in Islamabad, even further from his native place. But he has bought land, he is a GS, well-established and well off.

25) Mohammad Ali Ibrahim

Mohammad Ali Ibrahim, in his mid-fifties, comes from the village of Baltoro. He is the brother of Hajji Ali, shopkeeper in Skardu (annexe 1, # xx) and Mussa who looks after the family lands in Thalay (annexe 1, # xx). MAI went to Karachi in 1970, after having married in Thalay. He went for Arabic Studies, which he finished in 1978. After completion of the studies he joined the visa department of the Saudi Consulate here in Karachi, in the period 1978-90. In 1982-83 he also completed his LLB. Since 1991 he has been practicing as an advocate. At that time MAI visited home every or every second year. It was not until after he had completed his Arabic Studies and secured the job at the Saudi Consulate that MAI moved his family to Karachi where they have been living ever since. In 1982 he bought a house in Karachi Administrative Society, a more posh part of Mahmoodabad. He remarks that "....my neighbour does not know where I come from..... he has no right to ask me" (said in the context of how other ethnic groups look upon Baltis).

His oldest daughter, 25 years and passed Matric, is married to Ghulam Haider (annexe 1, # xx), and she now lives in Baltoro. The oldest son, aged 21, is in part two of B.Com, and another son, as well as a daughter, in part one of F.Sc.. There are also some younger children.

Despite having his nearest family here in Karachi, MAI visits Thalay 1-3 times per year, and he has invested in land in Skardu. It is, as he says, difficult to do business in Thalay. When I say that many *Thalaypa*, who live

with their nuclear family in Karachi, tend to visit home infrequently, he says that it is not a matter of lacking affection, but rather high travel expenses.

COMMENTS Interesting encounter carried out in English. Friendly man, more of a villager than I had expected after his long spell in a Karachi environment that is more cosmopolitan than what other Baltis in Karachi encounter. Old car parked outside the house, computer on the table, some sort of office, it seemed. He said that he had been told that I liked *sabas chai* (butter tea with salt), so he had had some made for me. Complained about the butter - the PIA did not allow butter onboard their flights. Comments on neighbour reflect what could be termed the “normal” urban anonymity that is, it seems, a more prevalent characteristic in the more posh areas than in the *katchi abadis*.

26) Ghulam Abbas

Ghulam Abbas, son of Ali Jan, is 28 years old, he is married and comes from the village of Chundo.

He came to Karachi in 1980, for education. He was going with his uncle, and in fact crossing the path of his father who had just returned home after having spent 20 years in Karachi.

The first year GA lived in Garoo, in the house of his uncle, Hajji Jan. But as the latter left for Saudi Arabia, GA moved on to live with other relatives in Garoo. He has now spent a total of 20 years in Garoo, he likes the environment, it is a good society - a total of 250-300 houses, 40 of which are Balti. In 1980 there was a total of 8-10 *Thalaypa* in Garoo, but now there is just one family left. Now GA is living in Mahmoodabad, with the family of his uncle - who is in Saudi Arabia again.

GA passed his Matric in Science in 1990. He would have liked to go on for higher education, but he could not qualify (the others were cheating, he claims). Work wise, he started doing part-time jobs already when in Middle School, and from 1990-2000 he has been working in companies, making salaries of 3000-4000 per month. For the time being, February 2001, he is jobless. He won't say that it is difficult to find work, but they always tell him to come back in a week or two.

GA got married in 1998, to a girl from Tasso, and she has moved to Karachi. They have no children so far. Throughout his stay in Karachi he has been visiting home every 2 or 3 years, and he remits a total of approx. 5000 rupees per year. When asked if he wants to go home, he refers to the problem of finding a job, and he says that he can't stand the winters in Thalay, having been away for so long.

COMMENTS: Cheerful guy, seemingly not all that bothered by his present employment situation. Interesting, but I guess not unusual, that he has never been living permanently in the same house as his father. Paths have crossed, and that is all. I guess that he is more attached to his uncle's family where he, in the almost permanent absence of Hajji Jan, is the master.

27) Hajji Mohammad Jan

Hajji Mohammad Jan, son of Mohammad Jan, is around 50 years old (no one seemed to know for sure, and he was not around to tell) and comes from the village of Chundo. He has no education, but he works, it seems, as an electrician.

HMJ went to Saudi Arabia the first time in 1981, and he has been going ever since, usually for periods of two years at a time. He is still working in the same company, making a salary of 35.000 rupees per month. He owns a house in Garoo, bought 6 years ago at a cost of 250.000 rupees. Now his family is, however, living in Karachi, due to the schooling of the children. Both the boys, daughter still too young, attend English Medium schools. He married 12-15 years ago, also a bit dubious. But his oldest son has not visited Thalay since the family left Chundo and settled in Garoo, 8-10 years ago

COMMENTS; Too bad that I couldn't talk to the man in person. The so far only example of the largely uneducated flow of gulf migrants from the 70s and 80s. Though uneducated he takes care to give his children a good schooling, but the linkages to the native valley seem to worry him less. Not into house building at home. Interesting that the brothers have taken turns being away. Another missing link that I should have looked into in Thalay.

28) Ghulam Ali

Ghulam Ali is 23 years old, he is newly married, and comes from the village of Hadangus. In 1992, at the age of 15, he went to Karachi. Here he completed high school and began an FA, which he finished in 1999.

He went to Karachi because his father was poor, and there was no future in working at home. As he had to support himself, he went to Karachi. Here he first stayed at Thalay House while working as a waiter in 'Copper

kettle' and 'Salt and Pepper', both quite posh restaurants. In later years he has also been running his own business, in fast food.

He has been going home to Thalay, dutifully, once every year, and he has been sending money home "sometimes". During the past 3 years he has, however, managed to have a house constructed for his family, at a cost of "minimum 300.000 rupees. "Homeland is nice", he says when asked why he does not get a house in Karachi.

Now he is at home to get married (we first met him a few days ago, walking with his father to Khasurmik to invite the family of his mother). Though he is financially independent, and even supports his family, it is his father who has chosen the bride. He does not like the practice, but accepts it.

He will be going to Karachi again, without his wife, towards the end of November. He says that he is jobless, but does not seem too concerned.

His brother, aged 17, has been staying with him in Karachi since 1997.

January 2001

I meet GA again after the Friday Prayers in the Nurbakshi Friday Mosque in Mahmoodabad (located right next to a Sunni mosque). He is one of the few who are dressed in pants and shirt, and at first he appears slightly hurt and asks why I have not called him earlier.

GA is also a member of the Thalay Welfare Organization, and after the prayers he was collecting money from the 'Thalay boys' present.

We go to a house just outside Mahmoodabad where his younger brother is working as a chowkidar. GA (smiling, a bit aloof): "Every Baltistani is a chowkidar". The family that owns the house is away, so the brothers can use the rather posh living room, one wall of which is dominated completely by a poster depicting the *kabah* in Mecca. The youngest brother of the family, aged 8, has come with him to Karachi where he is attending an English medium private school. In Thalay he was attending 3rd. class, but here he has started in class 1.

GA still has to pass exams in two subjects, one of them English, in order to get his F.A., and he has exams in January. Afterwards he will start working again, as a supervisor in a new branch of 'Copper kettle'. His wife has stayed in Thalay where she is looking after her sick mother, but she might come to Karachi at some later stage. We speak at length about marriage culture here and in Denmark, more exchange than direct criticism.

GA also enquires into the possibilities for migrating to Denmark, but his ultimate goal is to go to the US.

29) Hajji Sheir Ali

(interviewed in Thalay, met again in Karachi several times, interviewed concerning his brother, Mohammad Jussuf (# 23)).

Hajji Sheir Ali is 30 years old, he is newly married, and he comes from the village of Yearkhor, but he has spent most of his life outside Thalay. At the age of 10, he was sent to Karachi where his brother was living. He finished Matric in 1987, but did apparently not work until he went to Saudi Arabia in 1991, after the Gulf War. His brother, who was living there at that time, supplied visa and work permit. HSA worked in different professions – shop keeping, work in restaurants, office work - until his recent homecoming. His visas, valid for 1-2 years, have seemingly been extended as a matter of routine at the office of his sponsor. He has been staying with his brother in Riyadh, and whereas he likes the modern facilities of Saudi Arabia, he dislikes the Saudis who, he says, treat foreigners like second class people. For the time being he does not know whether he is going to return to Saudi Arabia, it seems to depend on whether the brother can provide a new visa.

Asked how many times he returned during his time outside Thalay, he replied 4-5 times during his years in Karachi, twice during his stay in Saudi Arabia. He has built a house, a good house, in Thalay, probably during his last visit back home, and he has recently married here. He maintains that he would like to come home and stay in Thalay, at some stage. He does, however, also have a house in Karachi, though it is not clear whether it is the house of his brother.

COMMENTS

AH seems more positively inclined towards life in Thalay than was the case during our first conversation when he complained about the simple life and lack of local job opportunities, and he gave the impression that he would be leaving as a matter of days. Maybe the presence of the local *bar mullah* has influenced him somewhat. He remains a very mild, soft-spoken man, but I have difficulties envisaging him here as a farmer.

30) Mohammad

(interviewed in Thalay)

Mohammad is 25 years old, married at a very young age, 14 years, in 1988, and he comes from the village of Hadangus. He has got 3 daughters and has been living in Karachi since 1991. Presently he is in Thalay, busy building a house before leaving for Karachi again. Normally he comes home 1-2 months every summer if his family is here.

He has been having his family with him in Karachi for several periods of, at first, 2 years, and then 3 years. His wife prefers to live in Karachi where there are many facilities and it is not so cold. He himself also prefers Karachi, but at the same time he considers it necessary to build a house here, as this is his "homeland". He has only got little land in Thalay, 3 kanals, farmed by his wife's family.

During his entire time in Karachi he has been working for the same company, Oil and Gas Development Corporation (OGDC) where he is now a government servant. It seemingly goes without saying that he stays there for 25 years, until he can get his pension. His present salary is 5,000 rupees, but it seems as if he makes some extra money as he is in charge of the company rest house where he is staying.

In the periods when his family has been living in Karachi with him, it was necessarily for him to hold two jobs - an extra job as head cook in a hotel.

He estimates that another 40-50 Thalaypa are living in Karachi, and they meet in the Thalay House in Manzoor Colony every Friday or on holidays.

COMMENTS: An example of long-term planning and unquestioned "allegiance" to the homeland. Since the age of 17 he has been based in Karachi, he has probably only little experience in farming, and both he and his wife prefer the city. But he is building a house here, planning for the time after his retirement.

31) Murad Ali Alipova

(interviewed in Thalay)

MAA is 24 years old, and he has passed Matric during his time in Islamabad. He went there in 1991 at the age of 15. According to him it was his own choice to go, he wanted education and job, and he knew Boa Anwar who was living there at that time. MAA found employment as an office worker, and he received a salary of 1500 rps/month. During the 4 years he lived in Islamabad, he stayed at the Nurbakshi mosque.

In 1996 MAA went to Karachi, he was offered a job as a house servant in the house of Wasim Akram. He is still working here, as one of 10 house servants, and he receives a monthly salary of 6000 rupees.

MAA goes home once every year. Last year he got married - to a girl from Chundo who allegedly married him without the consent of her parents. When I mention the word "love marriage", he laughs and says that they have been together many times in the *broq*. That seems to be a quite well-known practice.

32) Ghulam Mohammad

(interviewed in Thalay)

Ghulam Mohammad is 26 years old, he comes from the village of Burdas, and he has recently returned from Karachi. He has given examination for BA, but he does not yet know whether he will pass and get his degree. He is supposed to get married next month, to a girl from the same village.

In 1989 he went to Karachi. He had finished 6th. class, and at that time he could not get any further education in Thalay. It was his own choice to go to Karachi, but he is not able to express any dreams that he wanted fulfilled by way of education.

In Karachi he did not know anyone on beforehand, and he was staying in the Thalay house in Manzoor Colony, paying a rent of 100 rupees monthly. He got a job working as a cashier in a restaurant where 6-7 other Baltis are also working. From a starting salary of 1,500 rupees/month he now gets 3,500 rupees. He is now living in a flat in Abessinia Lines (but does not remember the address), paying a rent of 1200 rupees.

During his years in Karachi he has been coming home three times, each time staying a total of 3-4 months. He will be going to Karachi again in December, but he will return if he gets his degree. He will apply for jobs here, but only government jobs are of any interest.

NB Transportation costs Thalay - Karachi approx. 1500 rupees.

COMMENTS: Not a very eager respondent. Short answers, or none at all, and he did not even know, or did not want to volunteer, his exact address in Karachi.

33) Ghulam Hussein

(carried out over several occasions, as part of 'English teaching')

Ghulam Hussein is 26 years old, and he lives with his family that consists of seven members. It is a nuclear family, his father and uncles were living in Simla at the time of Partition. His father and one brother went to Karachi. His father is now 61 years old. For the last 10 years he has had a small shop, but for a total of 22 years he was working as a cook in Dubai. Now an older brother of his is working in Dubai. He was a waiter at Pearl Continental, and a visitor from Dubai asked him if he did not want to come and work in Dubai.

GM has passed Matric, but only the first year of his FA, after that it was necessary to get a job and make money. He is divorced, he was married to a woman from Kharmang, but it did not work out. She was a relative, and it was entirely the scheme of his parents. He describes the divorce as a formality, but says that he paid 20,000 rupees to the girl ("for her loss of honour", Jalal says)

The parents have now come up with another proposition, but he has declined. He makes money, so he wants to decide for himself. Both his sister and younger brother are married to Baltis, but in both cases it is Baltis descending from families that have moved to Karachi, one from Kharmang and one from Simla. His sister got married 4 months ago, and she lives in Korangi with her husband.

He maintains that there is quite a difference between Baltis here and in Baltistan, as Baltistani Baltis are much more old-fashioned. GM has visited Baltistan on two occasions, for 6 months in 1987, and for his marriage in 1998. It should be mentioned that his comments on Baltis in Baltistan are never biased in any negative way.

JANUARY: His uncle, the brother of his father, has died in his village in Kharmang, at the age of 75. GH has been making phone calls to relatives and friends and calling them to prayer like meetings where they recite the holy quran.

He is a Balti, but he has never lived in Baltistan, and he has only visited twice, once in 1987, and the second time in 1998, for his marriage. His father migrated, along with three other brothers, to Simla, and then onwards from Simla to Karachi (his idea of Simla is, however, somewhat vague and seems to include all Kashmir), but they come from Olding in the Kharmang Valley. He speaks Balti because, so he says, that is the language spoken at home (so he has got the language, but not the land connection). The family has still got land in Baltistan, but there are some problems, and he has not got his domicile certificate.

He works with some auto dealer - Toyota and Hyundai - and is, it seems, quite well off. He makes 5,000 rupees per month, and gives most of this, around 4,250 to his parents - somehow, it seems, a quid pro quo, because then they are not to tell him who he is to marry.

27.01.2001: GH asks me to type a letter he has written a draft of. It is for the manager of his company, and he asks to be transferred to a less strenuous unit. The curious thing is, to me, that the request has to be written in English.

29.01.2001: GH tells me that now they have stopped working for this month. They have met their January quota, and now they are playing cricket. There is an internal club tournament on 03.02.2001.

Despite his relatively good salary, he is very interested in migrating (perhaps because he does not have to make much of an effort to make ends meet), and he is pestering me about the possibilities of going to Denmark. A cousin has, so he says, paid 300,000 rupees for getting access to Great Britain. He also had the same offer, but his family could only come up with 200,000 rupees. Other relatives are in the US.

He also wears pants and shirts, and he disapproves, in a good-humoured way, of my dressing and my (lack of) shaving habits. He is, so it seems, not overly religious - came to me with a bag of samosas that we ate together one afternoon (during Ramadan). But he did manage to give quite a speech on religious history. He is a member of the local football club, but he has not played for a while. He is very fond of watching football and cricket on TV, has got cable TV. He emphasizes that he is connected to something called 'shahin', so that all the "bad" channels are censored. Nevertheless I meet him in the internet cafe where a mate from work is introducing him to the hardcore pages.

9/1 2001: Together with Kasim I pay a visit to his house, a *pakka* house with basement and first floor. His father is sitting in his shop, more like a big window, more like a pleasant way of passing his old age. We are seated in a quite posh living room, furnished and with a newish carpet on the floor. He apologizes that it took him some time to answer the bell, but he was watching cricket - South Africa against Sri Lanka.

GH is into religion. He can talk at length about the Shi'i religion, and when we come to talk about Ismailis, and I ask them about Aga Khan, he knows that Aga Khan lives in Paris most of the time. But he denounces the Ismailis, claims that they are not Muslims. He is into small bits of knowledge, picked up and exercised until he has memorized them.

(though they are friends, J and GH do not enter each other's houses. A friendship constrained by some laws of inhibition, one of which seems to be that they do not enter each other's domestic unit.

8/2 2001: GH comes along, he is in the middle of a game of 'buta', taking the day off, because he has missed his bus this morning. He asks me to write an application as well as bio-data for him, for his brother in Sharjah and cousin in Suffolk, not Cardiff, but Suffolk in England. I am to leave the address space blank, to be filled in later.

34) **Mohammad Khan**

Mohammad Khan is 70 years old, and he comes from the village of Daras in Kargil. At the age of 10 he went to Simla along with some other boys, carrying with them bags of barley flour. They would also often be trading seeds of apricots. There were no restrictions on Baltis who wanted to go to Simla. The normal route was Baltistan - Kharmang - Kargil - Srinagar. MK estimates that at that time a total of 14,000 Baltis were living in the hill stations - Simla, Mousooria, Dalhousie, Nainital - and 3-4000 Baltis were settled permanently in Simla. The neighbourhood where they were living was originally called Ladakhi Mohallah, but due to the many Balti migrants, it changed its name to Baltistan Mohallah. The mayor (civilian leader) of the mohallah was Kacho Mehedi Ali Shah, from around 1930 until Partition.

The permanent settlers engaged in different trades.

- there was a baker and confectionary line, mainly people that were *kacho*, the ruling group in Baltistan. The first Balti baker in Simla was the founder of a confectionary line

- people from Shigar and Skardu enlisted in the British Army. Only Shi'is had this opportunity.

- contractors were in charge of building construction, and they engaged non-permanent migrants for specific construction purposes.

Non-permanent migrants stayed a maximum of 2 years.

In Simla he got work fetching water, at 35 paisa per day.

After Partition they were given 24 hours to leave by train. They lost all belongings. Those who survived stayed at Walton Camp, a transition camp outside Lahore that was very congested. Some returned home to Baltistan, others went to Karachi.

As they were poor people they settled in Abessinia Lines that had earlier been part of the Army Firing Range. 3-4 men were in government service, and there were government housing here, and so it started.

Upon arrival MK found work making sewages, and his father also settled and got into construction work in 1951. He himself joined the army, and later, in 1965, he started working for Siemens. He has recently retired. Accommodation wise the family advanced from a hut to a rented house to their own house in PECHS Society. MK does not consider Baltistan his homeland. My Simla, he says - emotionally touched as he recalls his boyhood. His sons do obviously not have any memory of Baltistan. They like going there, but they do not know anyone, and they do not know the language.

35) **Rashid (Mass communication)**

Rashid has been living in the Shigar House for around 7 years. He is doing a M.A. in Mass Communication here in Karachi, supplementing with work that seems more full than part time. He explains that he works from 8 to 3 and then takes classes from 4pm to 6pm in the afternoon. He states that he aims to return to Baltistan upon completion of his education. As I say that his subject is not taught at the colleges, he maintains that he wants to work at a local newspaper. He has also taken an English course, and whereas he got high marks in written English, the spoken part was not as good. He is, like many of the other senior residents in the house, very interested in improving his English - "it is the official language of Pakistan" - but it is very difficult, and he is asking for advice. His English is, however, the best of the bunch in the Shigar House. He explains how the Baltis prefer to stay in Abessinia Lines: "Here we do not feel that we are not in our village". But they also want to go abroad, ".....especially to the USA".

Hashid is in favour of having the army in charge: "The law and order situation is better", he says. So is the job situation: "Jobs are given on merit, not because of connections". As all Baltis, he used to like Benazir Bhutto because of her father who abolished the local rule and actually visited the valleys of Baltistan. But Benazir is no good. Zia Ul Haq is no good either, partly because he killed Bhutto, partly because he favoured the Sunni Muslims. They link this directly to the Sunni attack on Gilgit in 1988.

Hashid knows his Pakistani history very well. He knows the Lahore Declaration, and a lot of exact dates. But curiously, like Yasin he has never visited Khapulu.

He has an uncle who works as an engineer in Saudi Arabia, But it seems as if the uncle also has a residence permit in Australia, and he goes there for a week or two every year in order to maintain his claim.

20/2: Hashid tells me, upon my direct enquiry (Hassan Shahd told me) that he is going home for an interview for a position as a teacher at the high school in Shigar. There are a lot of vacant positions - around 40 in Shigar? He has got 1 week unpaid leave, so he will basically just get there, go for the interview, and return to Karachi. "It's an emergency", he says. But he will return, his exams are in April and May. The expenses involved in the journey roughly amount to one month's salary (2500 rupees).

36) Ghulam Abbas

Ghulam Abbas is from Kuenas, he is 52 years old and has been living in Karachi since 1967. At the age of he arrived in the company of another man, and he found work in Clifton, digging sewage. After different jobs and accommodation, he found employment in the Javedan Cement Factory on Mango Pir Road. Along with other workers he encroached outside the factory, but in the start of the 70s he was given the land.

He was married in 1988, in Baltistan - maintains that it is too expensive to get married in Karachi. Two children, but his wife has had 6 miscarriages. He has built a new house which he shares with Said Mehedi Shah from Tasso in Thalay. A big courtyard, a laundrette and outdoor kitchen facilities.

He is still working in the cement factory, making 7000,-/month, including allowances (standard salary is 2600,-), and upon retirement, at 60, he can look forward to a pension of 4-700.000 rupees as well as 1400 rupees monthly. He says that the settlement is very much like a village, and just once a month does he go to Karachi for shopping. Probably at similar intervals that people at home go to Skardu.

During all his years in Karachi he has only been back home 6-7 times, but he is not in doubt that he will go home upon retirement. "What is there for me to do here?" he asks. I ask him what he is going to do in Baltistan. Back to farming. His house in Iqbal Nagar is then to be rented.

COMMENTS: It remains interesting that Ghulam Abbas seems firmly resolute to return to his native village upon retirement, despite having spent most of his life in Karachi. His attachment to Karachi seems confined to the exploitation of local livelihood opportunities.